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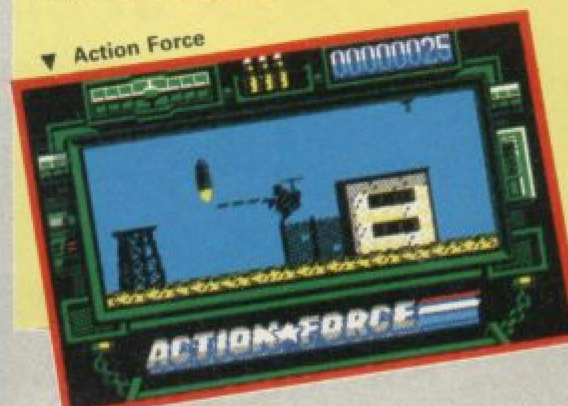
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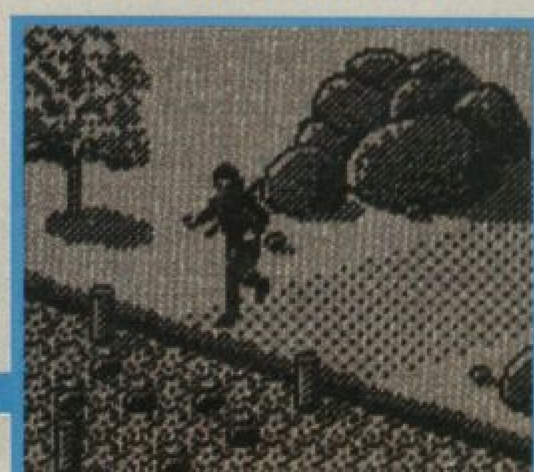


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Slaine ▲ ▲ Dark Sceptre

PREVIEW



● Knightmare, new from Activision, based on the hit D&D-style TV series



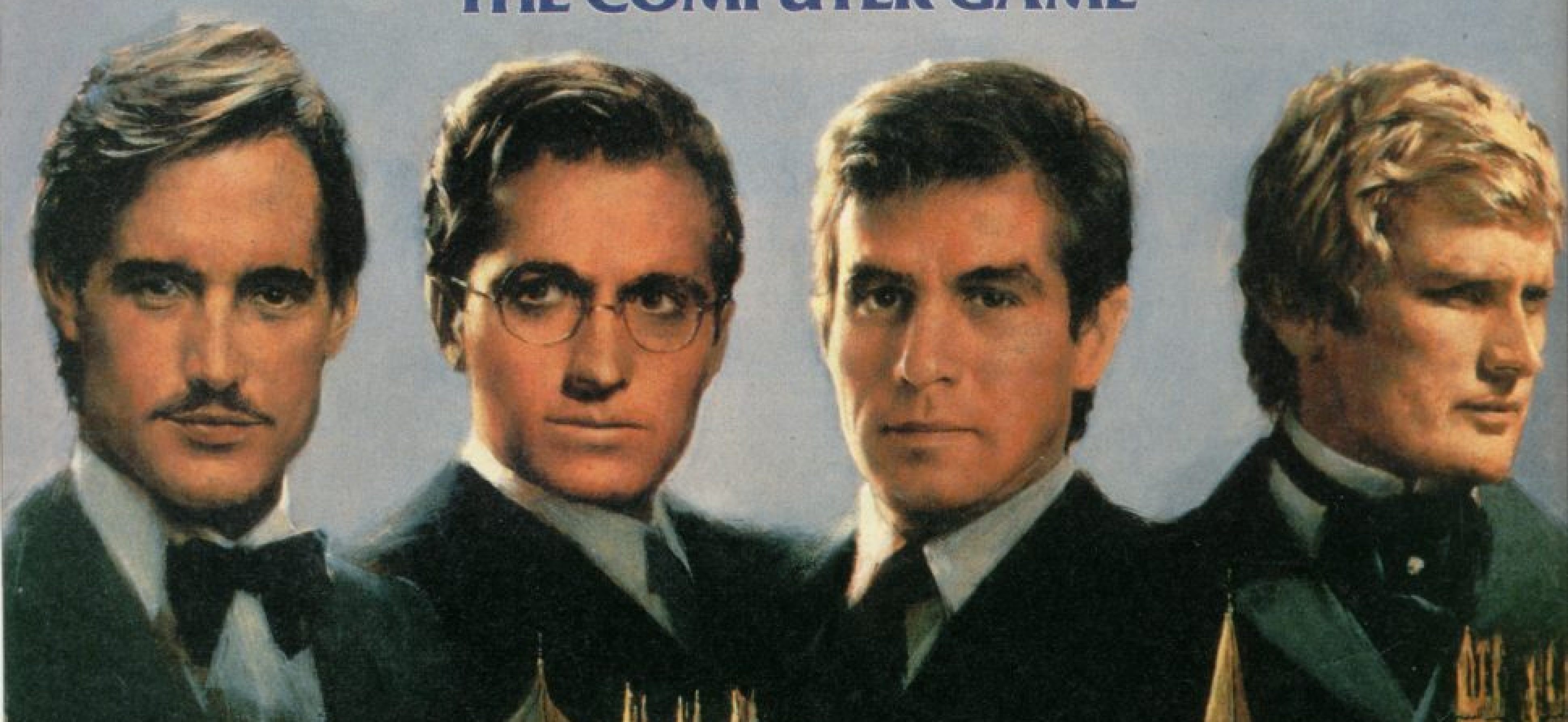




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UNDER RAPS!

Along with **The Pink Panther,** MagicBytes will be programming **Clever and Smart,** involving lots of disguises and an egg. Described as a 'slapstick comedy', **Clever and Smart** will be available from November, says Ariolasoft

Gremlin's in house proggers are hard at work on **Blood Valley,** based on the Duelmaster series of books. This is not to be confused with the game called **Duelmaster** from Virgin, which is based on a totally different set of interactive books. So there's no confusion about that at all, is there?

Source is programming **Firetrap,** by Electric Dreams. **Firetrap** is all about running up the side of a building and rescuing people in danger of frying tonight and it's due out in November

Search for the lost treasure of Babylon with **Karnov,** a fire breathing Russian (so it's true what they say about the Communists). Mr Micro is doing the conversion of the Data East coin-op for Electric Dreams, and it's due out around February of next year

Honestly, truly, really, really, St Brides is programming **White Feather Cloak,** based on a poem by designer Mark Pearson. No surprise to find this one's a graphic adventure, and it's the first part of a trilogy. **White Feather Cloak** is due out in November from Starlight

ODE, the team that coded **Trivial Pursuit** are busy working on **Block Busters** – a completely revamped version of the old Macsen Classic (!) – for Domark. Can I take a 'P', please Bob . . .

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Whod

Dungeons & Dragons!

Ask anyone interested in fantasy what the ultimate in role-playing games is, and they'll most likely point the finger at the phenomenally successful *Dungeons and Dragons.*

So it's no surprise there was considerable competition among software houses for the licence to TSR's D&D **and** Advanced D&D.

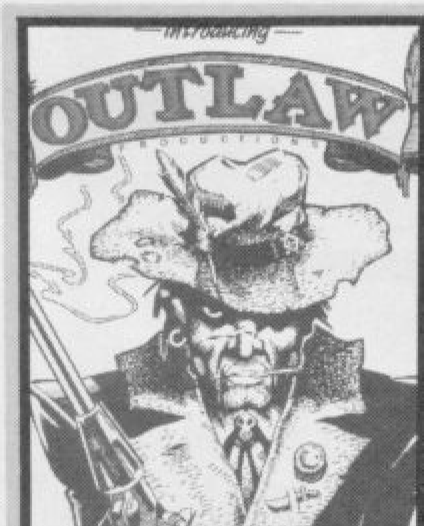
Now, at the recent PCW Show, US Gold announced that it had joined forces with the leading American strategy software firm Strategic Simulations Inc in a deal to produce what could be as many as ten titles from one licence.

SSI already had a deal with TSR (which produce the D&D **board game). What they didn't have was any history of programs on the Spectrum, or any of arcade action games. Both of which US Gold most certainly does have. So the deal is that SSI will work on fantasy role-playing games, whilst US Gold will produce the action games and conversions to the Spectrum.**

***Dungeons & Dragons* was the first role-playing game devised, published in America in 1974, and has enjoyed massive popularity ever since. *D&D* has much in common with computer adventure games; it is set in an imaginary world – where magic works – populated by creatures of myth and legend – goblins, dragons, elves, dwarves.**

Unlike adventure games, however, D&D **is a social game played by groups**





Software houses are changing names as often as some of us change our underpants. US Gold, Ariolasoft and even Softek are introducing new labels left right and centre. And just in with a late runner we have Palace Software, and its new label, Outlaw.

According to Palace, the new label will carry games from independent programmers, and the name Palace will only refer to games programmed by Steve **Barbarian** Brown, and Dan Malone (of **Antiriad** fame). Amongst those lined up to produce Outlaw games are Denton Designs, Sentinel Software and Binary Vision.

The first release on Outlaw is likely to be **Starship,** around January/February time

Games for the 128K+3 are starting to come out of the woodwork. Latest news is that Martech is set to bring out a disc containing no less than four games, all of which we at SU loved.

Nemesis the Warlock, Slaine, Catch 23 and **Pulsator,** will all be available from the end of October, price £14.99

Yet another Budget label, this time from Softek, following close on the heels of its new ACE label. Called The Micro Selection, the new label is set to be a biggie, with about one hundred games to be released during the first year. Most of the games will be new titles, although there are one or two that are re-releases. Amongst the new titles will be games programmed as far afield as Spain and Australia

Oh really, whatever next? Those of you who go dotty over the sight of Anneka Rice's bum wobbling all over the place on *Treasure Hunt* will be most pleased to hear that **Treasure Hunt** is going to be Domark's latest project. And what a horrible idea for a game that is, and no mistake . . .



Check out *Outlands.* Who says we're not on the ball? *Outlands* shows you the horrible, the disgusting, the completely revolting **Madballs.** *Whodunwot* tells you that **Madballs** are about to appear in an arcade type game from Ocean that's going to be pretty sickly. Taking the part of Dustbrain, a mummy's head who's not too tightly wrapped, try to persuade every other Madball to join our political party or even your cabinet (or your dining room table, whichever you prefer). Watch out for subversives. And keep a close eye on the cabbages and fish heads. Look out for an outbreak of spherical Madness around December

When Imagine signed a deal with Dinamic, the Spanish software house, they can't have known what they were starting. Now everyone wants their own pet Spaniard, and US Gold has got right in there, and got one for its little label, Go! Toposoft has been responsible for such dubious delights as **Survivor,** but it promises that it's going to try harder in the future. I'm sure Go! certainly hopes so

Some people found Maria Whittaker on the packaging of **Barbarian** a little tasteless. But she didn't bother the Germans. What did bother them about Palace's **Barbarian** was the violence, and they decided to ban it. Palace wasn't terribly surprised by the news – it had been warned that the rolling head might well prove too much for the Germans. And the 'ban' doesn't mean that nobody in Germany will ever get to play **Barbarian.** For a

unwot Newsdate: November



of half a dozen or so. The players use dice to create different characters – fighters, magic users, clerics or thieves – who have to explore a section of this fantasy world, mapped out by another player, the Dungeon Master (DM), in the same way as an adventure game designer will map out the locations in an adventure. It may be a labyrinth of tunnels, or an old abandoned castle, or even an entire city or country.

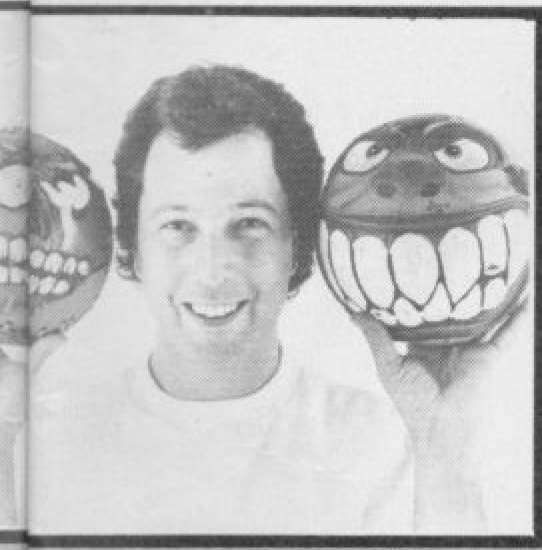
As the players solve problems and defeat monsters, they gain extra skills and so can take on bigger challenges; as a result, the game does not have a finite beginning or ending like other games, and players do not 'win'.

Strategic Simulations Incorporated – SSI – is one of the world's most respected publishers of computer strategy and wargames. The firm, based in Mountain View, California, has published a number of US titles – mostly on disc for the C64 – but a review of its latest, Colonial Conquest, in the American magazine *Strategy & Tactics* says 'industry leader SSI's computer wargames are notably complex and somewhat dry'.

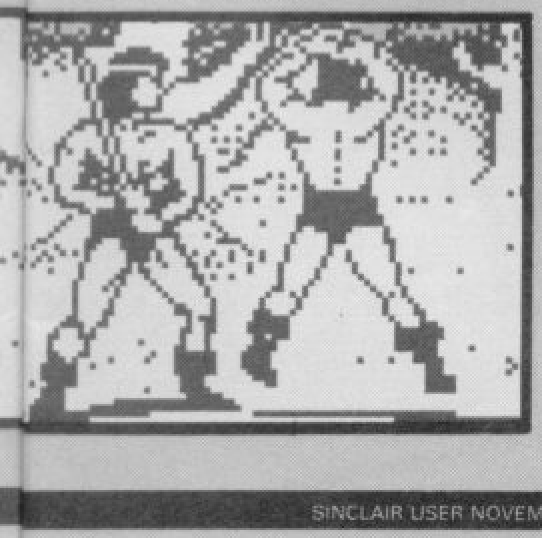
Compex and dry they may be, but they still sell in impressive quantities.

It is a huge deal, but US Gold is going a bit over the top by referring to it as: '*The* software licence of the decade'.

US Gold is currently working on the first of its games, as yet no programmer has been appointed, but storyboarding should be underway soon. A launch for the first official D&D title is set for some time around Easter■



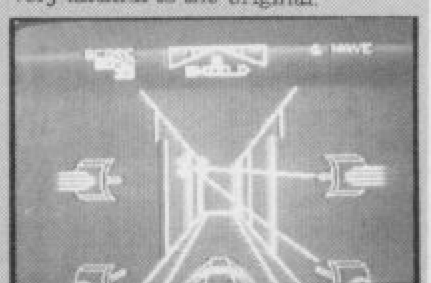
start, the ban hasn't yet been imposed, and sales of the game are still pretty high in Germany. Higher, probably, now I'd think. And once it does come into effect though, it won't be a total ban. Shopkeepers won't be able to promote **Barbarian**, and they won't be allowed to sell it to anyone under eighteen



● For some peculiar reason best known only to itself, Cascade has decided to turn the appalling Paul Hardcastle record (well, I thought it was appalling) **Ne-ne-ne-ne-Nineteen** into a game. You're a young boy soldier, sent over to nasty Vietnam and made to loot and pillage and fight a bit. Obviuosly the whole thing will be accompanied by disco-mixed Spectrum blips and simulated news reports. Cascade doesn't say when **19** will be finished, as it's having a bit of trouble with the music (arf arf)...

● Cartoon characters are proving popular licences, so it's hardly surprising that Ariolasoft is tremendously excited over **The Pink Panther** and **Tom and Jerry**. Fairly soon we'll be treated to the sight of the Panther shimmying across our screens, and there's not a thing we can do about it. Tom will be chasing Jez with a frying pan and falling over his tail, and all we'll be able to do is watch. It's all down to a little gang of lads known as MagicByte, and they're down to produce a total of seven titles for de boize at Ariolas. We're reliably informed that things will be turning a shocking shade of pink and cat and mouse games will be all the rage sometime in the New Year. All together now – De dum. De dum.

● Domark's latest licence is for the **Star Wars** coin-op. Being a somewhat older machine the graphics are more primitive than is now expected from an arcade machine, but it's still a darn good zap. And the conversion – looks very faithful to the original.



● OK sports fans, get a grip on yourselves. This is really going to get you excited. Ocean has decided to go completely over the top and release twenty odd sporty games all on one compilation. And that's not the best of it yet. In order to find twenty sporty games, Ocean have joined together with Activision, Virgin, Imagine and Psion and nabbed games off them to pop in the compilation. Including such goodies as **Konami Tennis**, **Super Soccer** and **Pool**, **Game Set and Match** – that's what the compilation's being called – will give you twenty games on four tapes for only £12.95



TWTMTW
THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS

Spending four days at the PCW Show is always a pretty profound experience. There are lots of lessons to be learnt. For example, by Day 2 I'd decided to steer clear of the Olympia burger. And the Olympia Cornish Pastie. And the Olympia Sausage Rolls.

Coffee is also to be avoided. The oppresive hear and crush of bodies is the surest way I know of getting a migraine. Happens every year.

But I guess nobody goes to PCW for the catering. They go to see all the new games in development for Christmas and, judging from the conversations overheard at the food counter, most people seemed pretty disappointed.

At first glance the show was the most impressive yet. The Oceans, Activisions and US Golds spent hundreds of thousands of pounds apiece on building their multi-floored silicon skyscrapers. Everything was bigger, bolder, brasher than ever before.

The snag was, underneath all the glitter, there wasn't much for the visitor to see. Instead of showing playable demos of new coin-op conversions everyone showed the original coin-op machines. The home computer version was nowhere to be seen. Instead of showing pre-release version of new movie tie-ins all we saw were videos of clips from the movies.

Of course, if you are a distributor or from the press you get taken inside the little secret huts built into each stand and shown the demos, and almost finished games – as many as possible of which we've tried to squeeze into this issue.

That's fine for the trade, but ordinary visitors to the show – judging from overheard remarks – felt cheated. 'There's nothing here apart from a few coin-op machines,' was the reaction.

PCW is turning into an ever more elaborate show-case for the software houses to sell through to the shops. A great deal of business is done, but, each year, there is less for the public to see. A great pity, I'd say, since the PCW Show is the only show there is■

JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT



Much quaffing of pale ale and chants of 'Hi ho silver lining!' at the party of the year. Yes, indeedy, hellraiser Riglar celebrated his 18th only a smidgeon of a week ago and rather a lot of people decided to turn up. Of course 99% of the party populace were of the 'gorgeous pouting feline vixen' category and several sprawled themselves across the dance floor, looking for more peanuts (I hate that advert!) After the customary midnight dip though things generally quietened down a bit mainly because it was pouring with rain. Who knows where that came from. Don't ask me. I don't know. But what I do know, is that this month's wicked *Zapchat* includes the map to section two of Game Over, **the** Game Over Editor, **the special SU version of** Deathwish III, **an Athena map and an awful lot more besides . . .**

This is it then folks. Imagine has actually released a decent game!! And because everybody here has gone raving mad (pal), giving away these funny little wazzock classic things to other games, I'd give

Renegade

mine. If I had one to give I mean. Whatever is the world coming to?

STAGE ONE

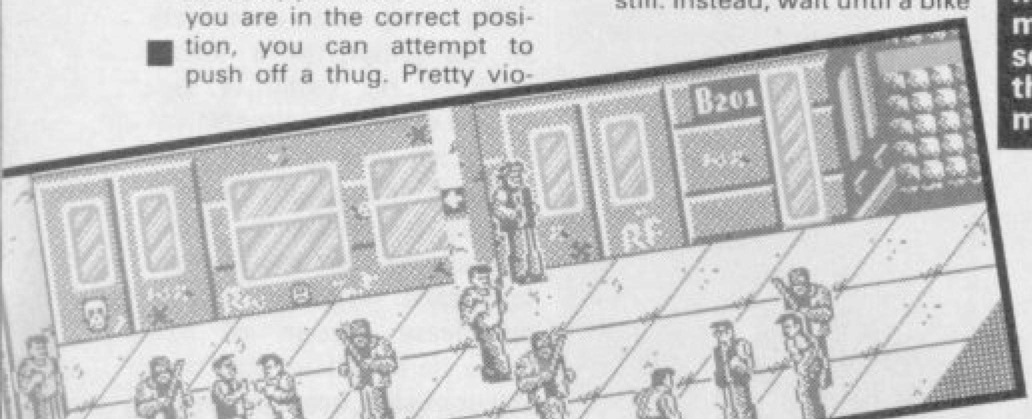
Being a rebel without a cause, you're stuck in the subway. All the action takes place on the platform with several thugs and one gang leader. All you have to do, is beat them up. Fairly simple. The thugs only require two high kicks before they disappear to the land of nod. And high kicks, I found, were the best sort of attack for the majority of stages. Make sure you are not pushed into a corner – move about all the time and avoid the end of the platform. Your man can be easily pushed off it, but, if you are in the correct position, you can attempt to push off a thug. Pretty violent really. Don't bother thumping the thugs, this will simply lower your power level – a couple of well timed high kicks should do the trick. After a couple of thugs bite the dust, you'll notice that the gang leader has entered into the proceedings. He's a totally different kettle of fish altogether.

If your time is OK try and avoid the gang leader altogether and bonk off the remaining thugs first. This should be fairly easy so long as one of the thugs doesn't hide behind his leader. This is a major problem. Keep wapping away with the high kicks, but run away every time to avoid the leader.

The leader himself needs a different type of attack. If you try to knock him off by using the high kick, you'll soon find that he protects himself and nothing else happens. Try distracting him by punching him in the left nostril (or the right if you can't manage it) and then immediately whop him with a high kick. You'll find that he collapses on to the floor. You'll need to repeat the process at least threee times before old muggins gives in.

STAGE TWO

This is my favourite. It's absolutely swingorilliant. It takes place on the pier where a group of raving mad motorcyclists have gathered. Again, it's a matter of whopping the surrounding thugs and then giving the leader a good doing over. Oooer. But, first, at the very beginning of the stage, you'll have to survive the thugs that drive straight at you on their bikes. There's no way of avoiding them and you'll be splattered if you just stand still. Instead, wait until a bike



approaches and then make a running high kick at the onboard-thug. If your timing is correct, the thug will fly off his bike. You'll need to do this for about three bikers before the rest of the gang launch their attack. The gang leader in this level is pretty mean and yet if you deploy a punch and kick routine with the occasional run like billyo, you should soon have him on the floor. The leader can survive around five good beatings.

STAGE THREE

Good one this. It all takes place in Sleezy Street where the gang leader is none other than the famous Big Bad Bertha. All the thugs are female this time and are carrying whips. The trick here is to move around constantly – if you so much as pause for a second, those whips will be cracking. And they're pretty mean – one hit and you'll be down on the floor. Again, the best tactic is the high kick and to stay as far away as possible from the other thugs. Once Big Bad Bertha enters the fight, you're in big trouble. She'll run madly across the play area and if your man happens to be in the way, he'll be swatted. Not nice. The only defence you have is to keep close to her. Sounds ridiculous I know, but if you stay close, she hasn't the room to charge!

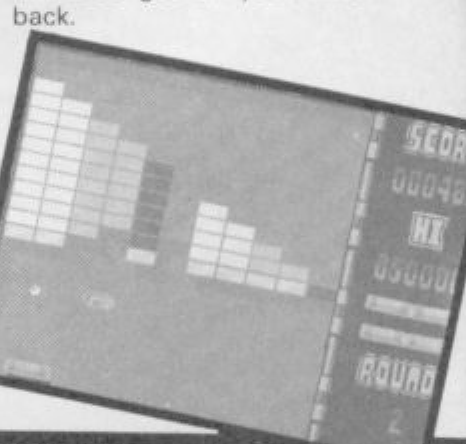
If you're lucky enough to own a 128 or Plus Two, you'll have an extra stage. Here the thugs are armed with razors – one slash with this and you're a gonna . . .

My. My what? My copy of

Arkanoid

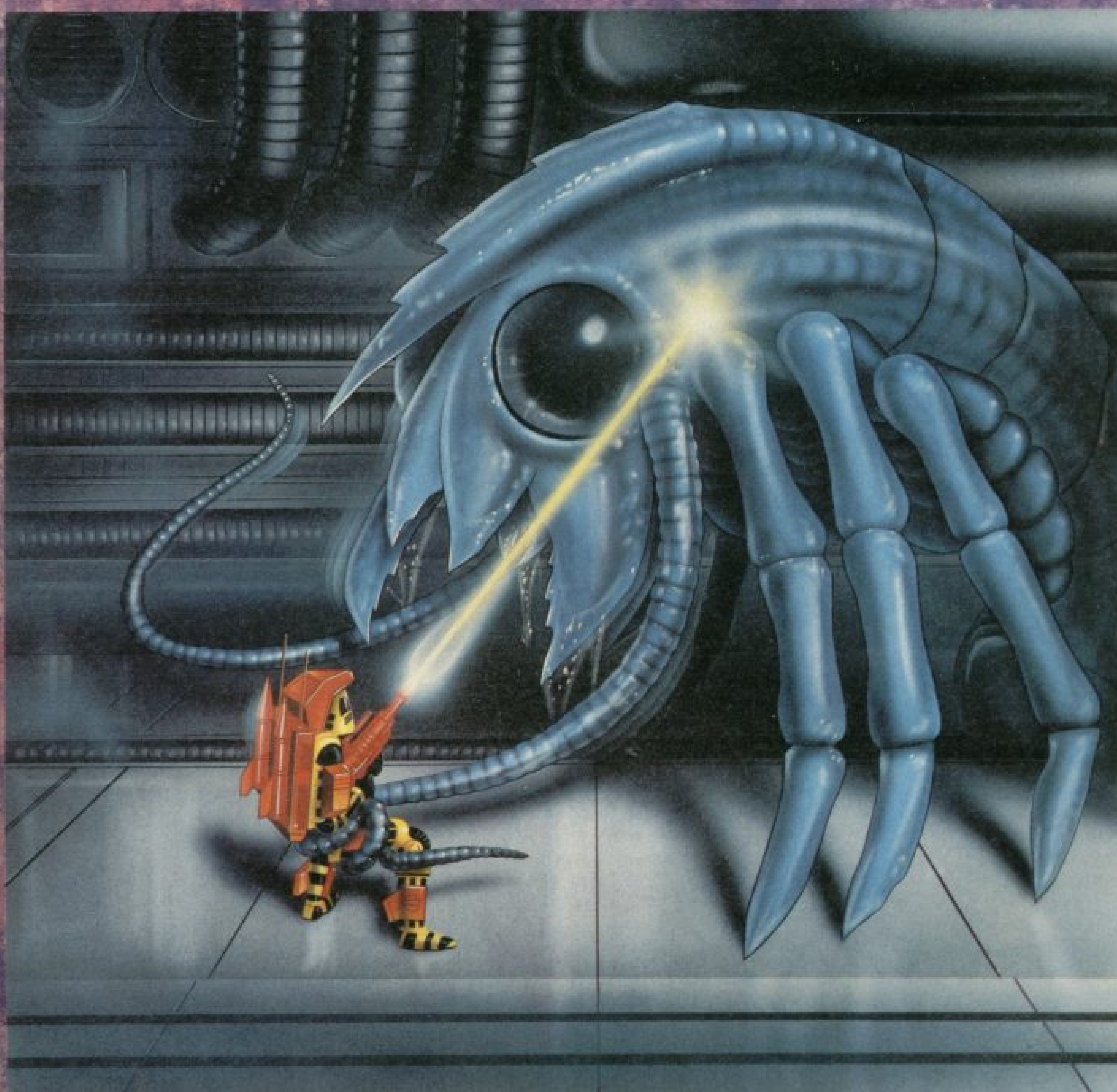
is what that's what! (Wow, what a humungous opening sentence!) As I was saying on the way down to the chippy the other day, 'There's a lot of it about.' 'A lot of what about?' said my companion cleaning my shoes. 'There's a lot of snappy introductions leading into a lot of snappy tips.'

Johnny Anderson of Northern Ireland has sent in his PBRAIN. All you need do, is get a score over 25000 to get on to the high score and then, when the high score table pops up type in your name as PBRAIN. OK so far? Now comes the difficult bit – when you get back to the options page, a message will be there telling you to press space to cheat. Cor blimey!! What does it do? Well, for starters you will re-appear on the last level you played on and there's more (as all the sheep farmers say). You will also get all your lives back.



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MEGA



◄ A leisurely walk to admire the scenery

Replace your ceremonial sword in its sheath. Loosen your kimono and order a double portion of sushi with french fries. Last Ninja – the previous No 1 C64 game – is up and running on the Spectrum, and we've got the only mega-preview worth reading.

Last Ninja (we're not quite sure what happened to the other Ninjas) is the ultimate combat game – fighting, exploring, questing – it's got the lot.

You have to battle your way through six levels, retrieve the sacred scrolls and take out the odd assassin, big archer, mad dog and Shogun on the way.

One of the reasons for the delay in releasing Ninja on the Spectrum was the difficulty in getting the figure to move authentically. The kind of things possible on the C64 are normally not easy to achieve on the Spectrum – and vice versa.

Obviously the development time has been well spent, because our little Oriental chum runs, jumps, somersaults and delivers that fatal blow brilliantly. Clothed head-to-foot in black, Ninja is practically faultless.

So are the backgrounds. The screens flip rather than scroll (as the C64 version), but it doesn't matter, each screen is put together before your eyes in seconds. What the scenery reminds me of most is Willow Pattern crockery (check our the china cabinet). Stylised Bonsai trees, rocks, little footbridges, fat, smiling Buddahs and the odd heron here and there. And the best thing about the graphics is that even though they're all monochrome, it





◄ The key to the whole game? Pick it up, it could be useful

LAST



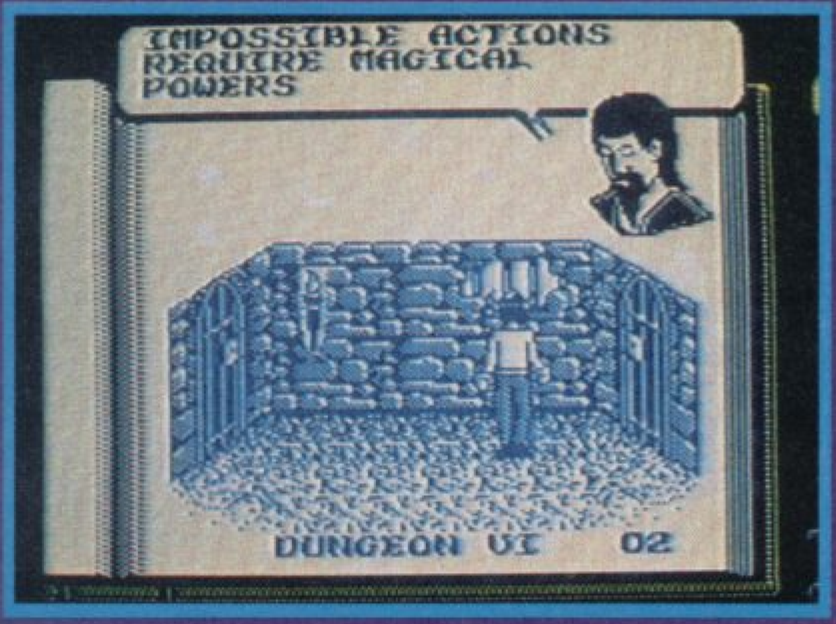
◄ Non-swimming Ninja gets that sinking feeling

I haven't been as impressed by the sheer inventiveness of an adventure game since the days when Gargoyle was launching Tir Na Nog upon an unsuspecting world.

Knightmare is something special. You could play the game quite happily without realising that it is quite closely based on a TV programme of the same name which itself used the latest computer generated images with *Dungeons and Dragons*.

The closest point of comparison for Knightmare is Heavy on the Magick. Both games were room-based, both games featured spell casting as a key combat feature.





And both also featured large animated graphics and some kind of text input.

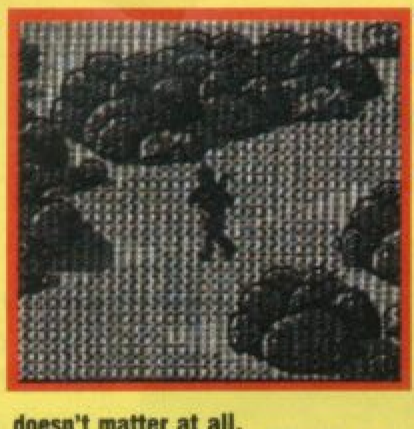
Knightmare can be played in a variety of levels. In some ways it is an arcade game with slash and hack combat. On another it features fairly straight adventure elements like text input, puzzles and riddles. In yet another way it's closely related to *Dungeons and Dragons* and those kind of strategic playing skills.

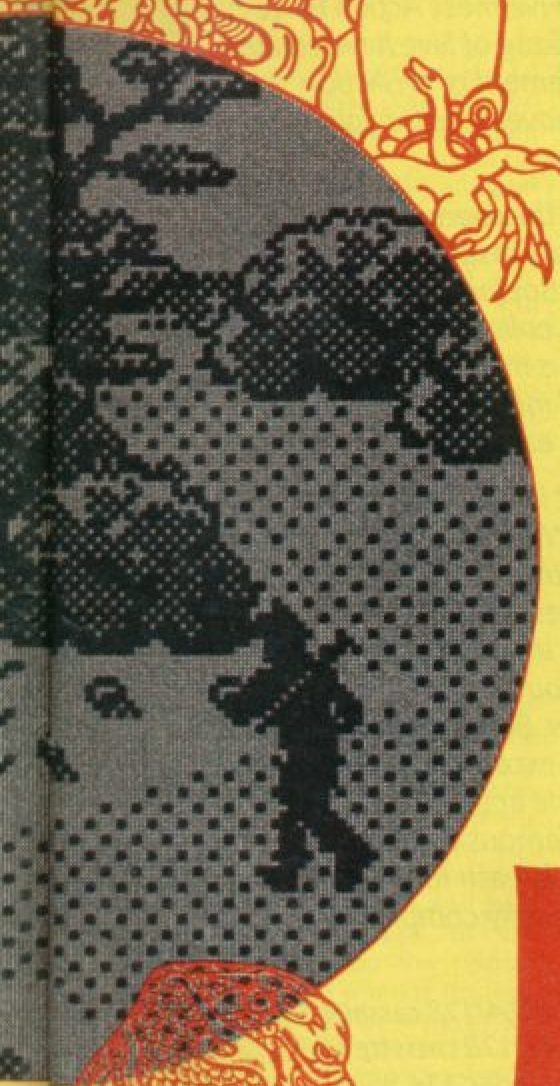
Input is via joystick and via what is quite possibly the most utterly obvious text input system I've ever seen. Try this: you try the word you

KNIGHT

PREVIEW

And yet more scenery ▶





doesn't matter at all.

Enough of the good looks, what about the action? Well the preview version SU saw had the levels, the landscapes, the combat moves and absolutely no assailants whatsoever! When it's finished though Last Ninja will be as action packed as the C64 – ie very tough.

The six levels, covering wasteland, dungeons, and the Palace to name but three, all have different enemies to attack. Beware of statues, skeletons and fire lions, all of which will do you no end of damage. As well as moving objects, there are natural enemies. Swamps and streams are certain death for poor old Ninja, as, for no apparent reason, the guy can't swim. Lots of jumping and somersaulting needed.

Not that it's all action. There's a certain order in which you must travel through each scene, taking each of the objects, which lends Ninja a pleasing, but not perplexing, adventure feel. A good solid mixture of thinking and thumping. It's really neat how, when you first enter a screen, any useful objects flash twice and then blend into the background. You've got to keep a really sharp lookout as you enter each screen. Something to please everyone? I hope so. From what I've seen of The Last Ninja, System 3 should have a sure fire winner.

And not only that, it's one of the most faithful conversions yet from the C64.

Streetdate: October.
Price: £9.99

◀ A Buddah with a likely piece of equipment for the Ninja?

A dead man with a dagger – get some protection ▶





A Buddah in the woods ▲

NINJA

MARE





think you want by pressing its first letter – suppose you want to open a door – you press O and lo *Open* appears as a suggestion at the top of the screen. If this is indeed what you meant you you accept it by pressing *Enter*. *Open* sits at the top of the screen, press D (for Door) and up comes *Door* as a suggestion press *Enter* again to accept the whole phrase. If the first suggestion the computer makes isn't what you intended you just scroll alphabetically through the list of words until you find the right one. It works fine, is brilliantly simple but does (thankfully) restrict you to two-word instructions.

Graphics are large and animated with all the care you expect to find in an arcade game. In the first location a mysterious and finely detailed old man trudges back and forth. In other locations walls suddenly spring to life and ask you questions or monsters arrive to do battle.

From time to time the Dungeon Master himself crops up, usually to tell you off or give you advice. He appears as a giant face floating above the scene just outside the action.

For those keen on the TV programme, or missing Gargoyle and its adventures this looks like it will do very nicely.

Streetdate: November.
Price: £9.99





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JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

Gawd, luvvaduc and where's me trousers?

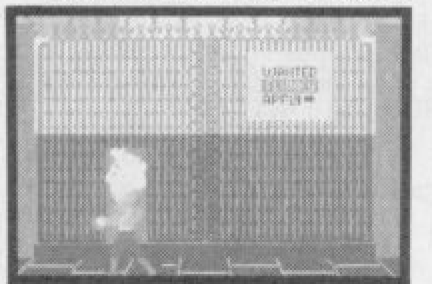
Flunky

has arrived! Pardon? I said **Flunky's** arrived! Really? Yes, and it's not really much cop. In fact, it's pretty ruddy difficult and small. And so, the tips:

At the start of the game, when you're told to light all the fires, make sure you do. The game has two main parts, and once you enter one, you will not be allowed entrance to the other unless you have lit all the fires.

If you enter the first section, you'll find Andy and Fergie. Andy is the one in the bath by the way. Now then, Andy will want you to find him a boat to play with. Don't, whatever you do, grab the boat in the nearby room. This is the wrong boat! If you do grab it, Andy will call the guard. The boat that he wants is found in the palace dungeon. To get to the palace dungeon, you'll need to find the secret door. Here's how – run to the room where Fergie is sitting and grab the remote control from the table. Now dash back to the room with the false boat. As soon as you enter this room, a panel in the wall will open and thus give you access to the dungeon. Drop the remote control and wander through the panel. After a bit of exploring, you'll soon find a bar. A pint of Pils please. No, not THAT type of bar! A bar in the wall which Flunky can grab hold of and pull down. Do this. The bar, when pulled, activates the portcullis in the lower dungeon to give Flunky access. Keep pulling the bar until the man automatically stops. Then go down the stairs and explore the dungeon. You'll find that there are actually three cells. All 1.5V (haw, haw, haw). No. Listen. The first and third cell are harmless enough, but the second will cause a bit of alarm. As soon as poor old Flunks enters the cell, the portcullis will drop and lock him in! You can easily get out, though. Try pulling the skeleton. If you pull it about 13 times, the 'cullis should go up far enough for Flunky to dash out. Also situated in this cell, is a boat. Andy's boat in fact. The problem comes when you try to pull the skeleton, grab the boat *and* escape before the portcullis crashes down. You can work that out.

The other cell in the dungeon complex contains what looks like a bomb. You know the sort of thing. A



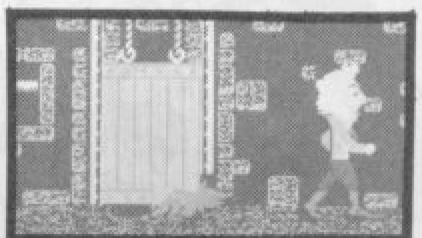
black blob with a bit of fuse sticking out the top. After lobing it around for a few minutes I've still no idea what it does.

The other character in this set of rooms is Fergie. And she wants Flunky to find her some freckles. Being an intelligent sort of chap, old Flunks runs into the bathroom and finds a box marked 'red' on the towel rack. He grabs hold of it and dashes back to Fergie, only to find that nothing whatsoever happens. Is this a Red Herring?

Another thing you may like to try. Grab hold of the remote control and run into the room which has the portraits on the wall. Press the *Fire* button. this will activate the helicopter picture and it will fly around a bit before dropping to the ground. This will alert the guard.

Moving on and into the next section (that's the second door from the beginning), you'll find Charles and Di. Charles is the wobbly character on his polo horse. He'll ask you to find and bring him his polo balls. This is quite hard. The three rooms to the right of Charles each contain one ball. You'll need to grab the springboard and charge into each room. It's a case of timing it so that the ball lands on the board and bounces into the next room. You'll lose a life if the ball lands on Flunky's head. Having managed to get all three balls into the room with Charles in the time limit, the next job is to position each so that Charles can hit them.

Di is perhaps the hardest person to please. She'll ask you to fetch her wig. Where is it? Well if you take your Flunky back to the room where Charles is situated, you'll notice a blob on top of the fireplace. That's the wig. The problem comes when you try and get at it. The only way is to shoot it. Grab the gun from Di's table and run back to Charles. You've then



got to shoot at it and persuade it to fly to Di. This takes a lot of doing. The wig likes to fly around where it likes. Once the wig manages to fly into Di's room, you need to blast it a couple of times to make it drop. You have to aim the wig exactly so that it lands dead on top of her head, otherwise nothing will happen.

And that's it. If you manage to survive long enough to complete the tasks you may just get a glimpse of Queen Liz herself in the final task. As it stands, Flunky is miles too hard for it's own good, and this will no doubt put a lot of people off the game altogether. If anybody managed to do anything interesting at all, then I'd like to hear from you . . .

READER'S BIG FIVE HUMUNGOUS CHART

'I think you are the most mega-cool, super trendy, wicked and all round good guy (where's me Raybans?) SU,' writes Mark Bunting from the Midlands. I know, I know, and yes you can have your chart printed

1	**Exolon**	**Hewson**
2	**Killed Until Dead**	**US Gold**
	(Hang on, Mark, that's an adventure)	
3	**Zynaps**	**Hewson**
4	**ATV Simulator**	**Codemasters**
5	**Arkanoid**	**Imagine**

'If it wasn't for your wonderful column, life would not be worth living' continues Mark. Oh, shucks. Mark's fave group is Queen and naffest game out is **Sports Pack.** 'That makes a change from **Eastenders**' says chirpy Mark. '**Exolon** is amazingly addictive but I'm sure that you can beat the game because you are extremely brilliant and fabulous!' Gawd, what a creep!!

ZAPCHAT BIG EIGHT: AHEM, EXOLON

I know, I know, I promised to cover **Game Over** this month. But it's not exactly that good is it? Besides, there was a triff response to the **Exolon** challenge published last time. In fact, such a good response, those who missed out get another chance this time. Now accepting votes for Deathwish III.

1	126,300	Richard Lessamen
2	120,850	Dave Mitchell
3	113,550	R. Cattan
4	112,150	Craig Lovelace
5	100,400	Martin Wright
6	91,000	Beth O'Dwyer
7	83,700	Ian Hazeldine
8	78,640	Michael O'Mahoney

And here's a tiny winy itsy bitsy little thingy from Thomas Williams who lives in Staffordshire. If you have bought

Colony

(at least I think that is the game) from Mastertronic (you're raving mad pal!) you may just be interested to learn that if you press the *Break* key on the beginning screen, the game will appear to reset and then the start-up screen on the Commodore 64 will appear. Even the flashing cursor is included. This will remain on your screen until you press a key – the game will then restart. Pretty swanky eh? Pretty weird, more like.

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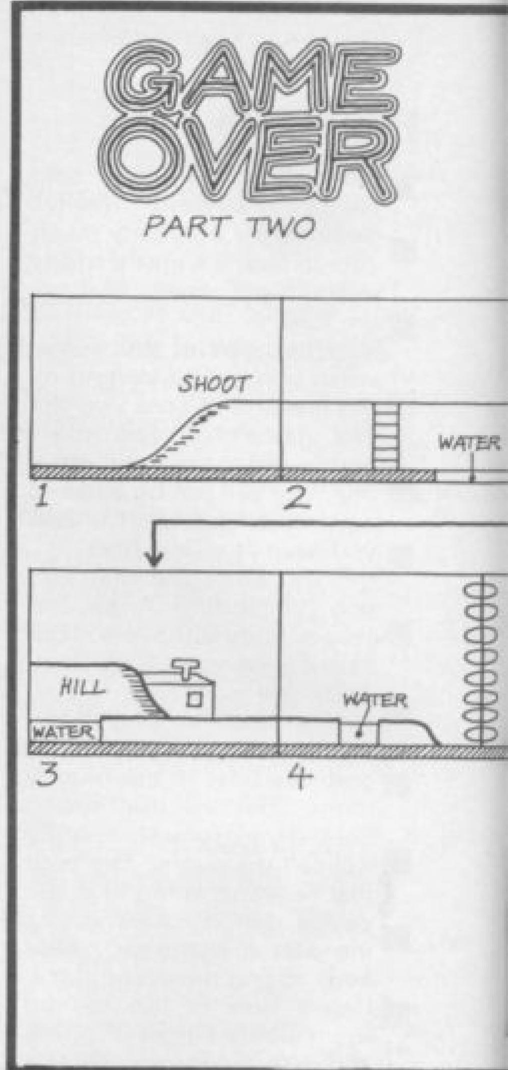
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Hooooooeeeghgehgrgh!!

Game Over!!

That rather drab little offering from Imagine that is for some obscure reason hellishly popular. Last month SU printed the first half of the map and I also gave away the access code for Part 2.

Part 2 is a bit more difficult than the first. You've still got to blast and dodge quickly to avoid power loss, but you also need to explore and find out what things do. Again, the playing area is fairly titchy, comprising only 22 screens and, in at least four or five of these, nothing happens. Anyhow, here's the map and what to do. The first thing you should do, is run to the right-hand side of Screen 1 as fast as you can – funny little wobbly creatures will appear on the ledge above your man, and tend to jump on to his head unless he moves. Make sure you climb up the ladder in Screen 2 to avoid drowning

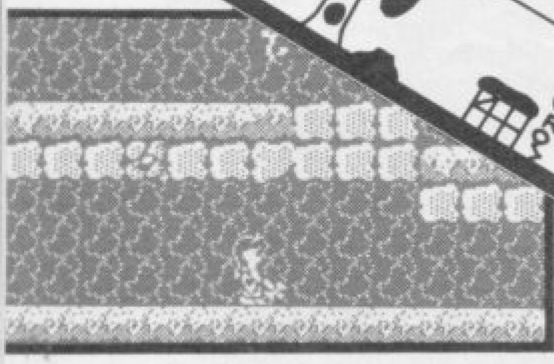


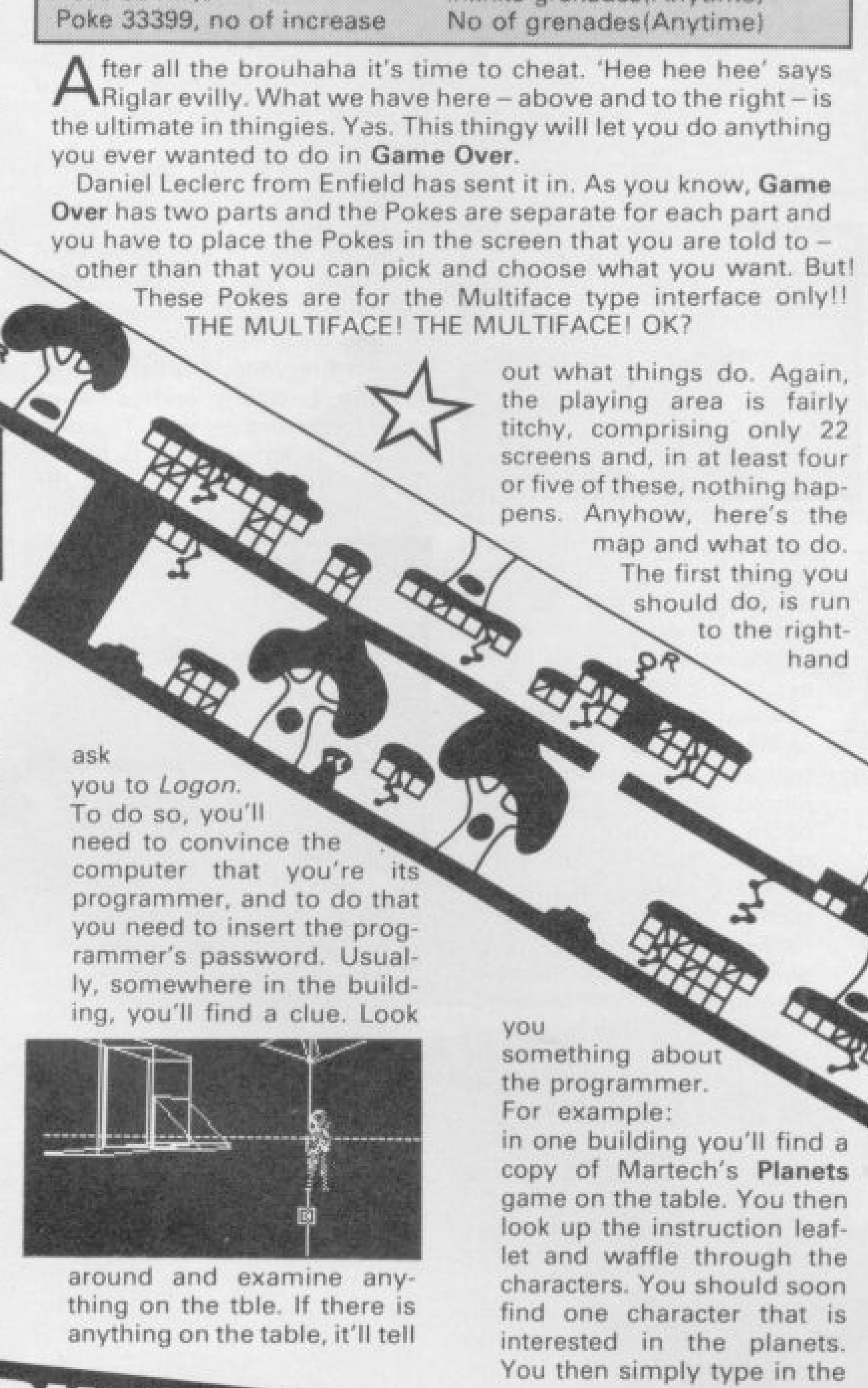
GAME OVER CHEATS – THE FIDDLY BITS

Poke	Effect	When to insert Poke
Poke 31870, no of lives	Lives	(Insert in main menu)
Poke 48790, no of lives	Lives	(Insert in game)
Poke 31880, no of grenades	Grenades	(Insert in main menu)
Poke 48794, no of grenades	Grenades	(Insert in game)
Poke 39096,0	Mines not kill	(Insert anytime)
Poke 33481,0 Poke 33482,0 Poke 33483,0	Walk through mines	(Insert anytime)
Poke 39345,201	No power loss	(Anytime)
Poke 32417,0	Infinite grenades	(Anytime)
Poke 33399, no of increase	No of grenades	(Anytime)

After all the brouhaha it's time to cheat. 'Hee hee hee' says Riglar evilly. What we have here – above and to the right – is the ultimate in thingies. Yes. This thingy will let you do anything you ever wanted to do in **Game Over**.

Daniel Leclerc from Enfield has sent it in. As you know, **Game Over** has two parts and the Pokes are separate for each part and you have to place the Pokes in the screen that you are told to – other than that you can pick and choose what you want. But! These Pokes are for the Multiface type interface only!! THE MULTIFACE! THE MULTIFACE! OK?





And then there's Imagine's platformy effort

Athena.

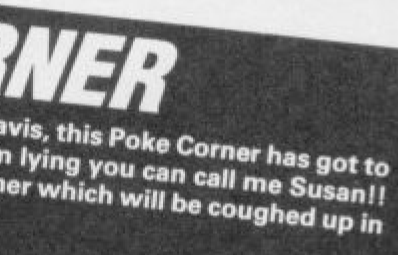
Niklas Egness from Sweden has sent in a nifty map of Level 1 along with some hints and tips:

- Learn which rocks hide useful items
- Learn which routes lead to the most powerful weapons
- Collect all the hearts that appear from roses (it's good for your life level)

A letter came from Keith Thompson, asking for some tips on

Catch 23

from Martech. He wants to know how to communicate with the computers in the game. Well, once you have located the computer, it'll ask you to *Logon*. To do so, you'll need to convince the computer that you're its programmer, and to do that you need to insert the programmer's password. Usually, somewhere in the building, you'll find a clue. Look around and examine anything on the tble. If there is anything on the table, it'll tell you something about the programmer. For example: in one building you'll find a copy of Martech's **Planets** game on the table. You then look up the instruction leaflet and waffle through the characters. You should soon find one character that is interested in the planets. You then simply type in the character's name and you'll have access to the computer. All further answers will be given in a code, and you'll have to crack it.

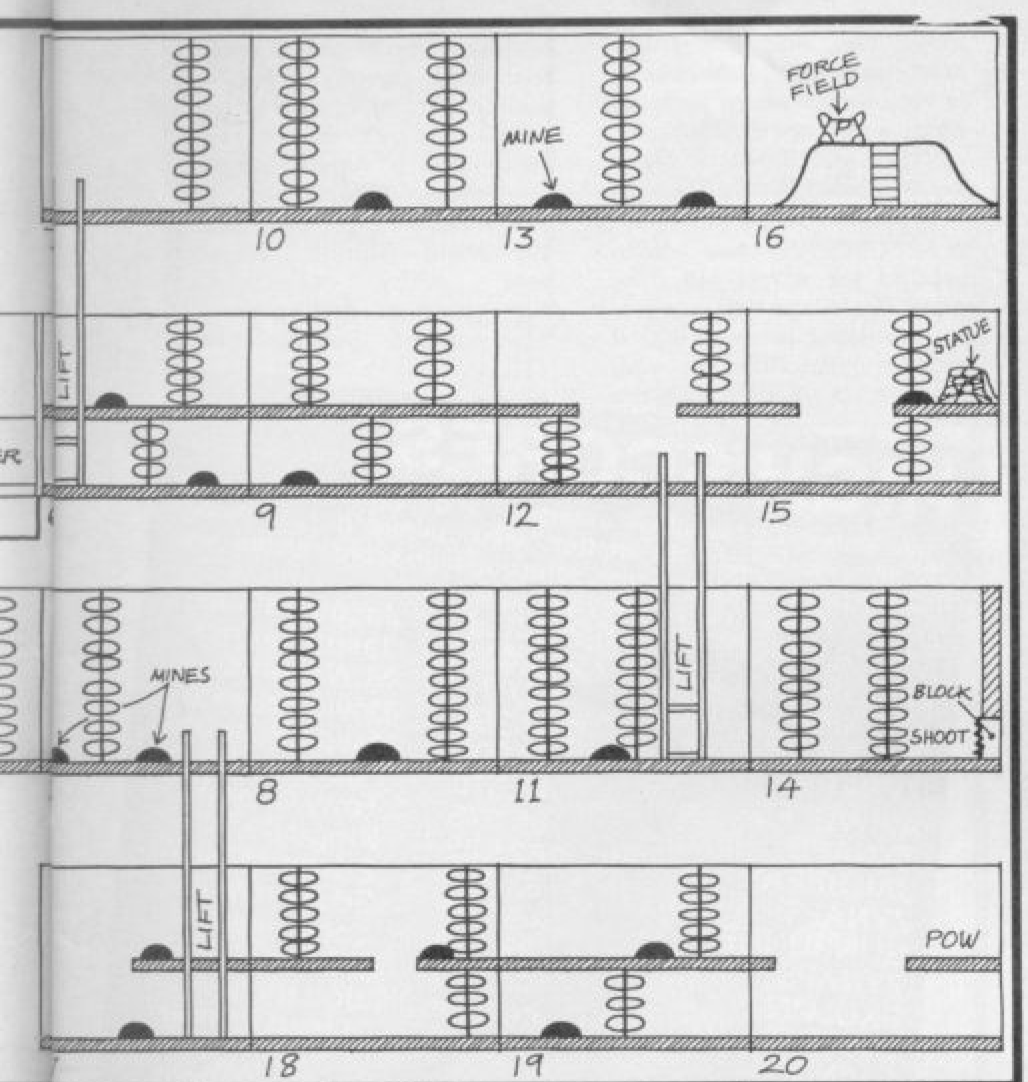


POKE CORNER

Stocked up entirely by Adrian Davis, this Poke Corner has got to be the best we've ever had. If I'm lying you can call me Susan!! For his efforts Adrian wins a tenner which will be coughed up in the nearish future. Gawp!!

Game	Poke	Effect
ROAD RUNNER	*Poke* 40806,0	Infinite lives
	Poke 39140,0	No fainting
RAMBO	*Poke* 37666,0	No enemy
	Poke 27401,12	Infinite lives
BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN	*Poke* 40476,201	Energy
	Poke 37605,201	No ghoulies
	Poke 35486,201	Infinite elixir of life
EXPRESS RAIDER	*Poke* 60147,12	Infinite lives
HADES NEBULA	*Poke* 61998,0	Infinite lives
WONDER BOY	*Poke* 34362,0	Infinite lives
THING STRIKES BACK	*Poke* 45255,0	Infinite lives
TRIAXOS	*Poke* 31724,0	Time
	Poke 34288,0	Dynamite
	Poke 38116,0	Ammo
BOULDERDASH II	*Poke* 31481,0	Infinite lives
KILLER RING	*Poke* 33636,0	Infinite lives
ULTIMA RATIO	*Poke* 55062,0	Infinite lives
	Poke 52424,182	Zap
BUBBLER	*Poke* 57514,12	Infinite lives
	Poke 52533,0	Infinite time
METRO CROSS	*Poke* 44490,12	Infinite time
SLAPFIGHT	*Poke* 48873,0	Infinite lives

And that's it. Pretty good eh?



JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

GAME OVER CHEATS PART TWO – THE WOBBLY BITS

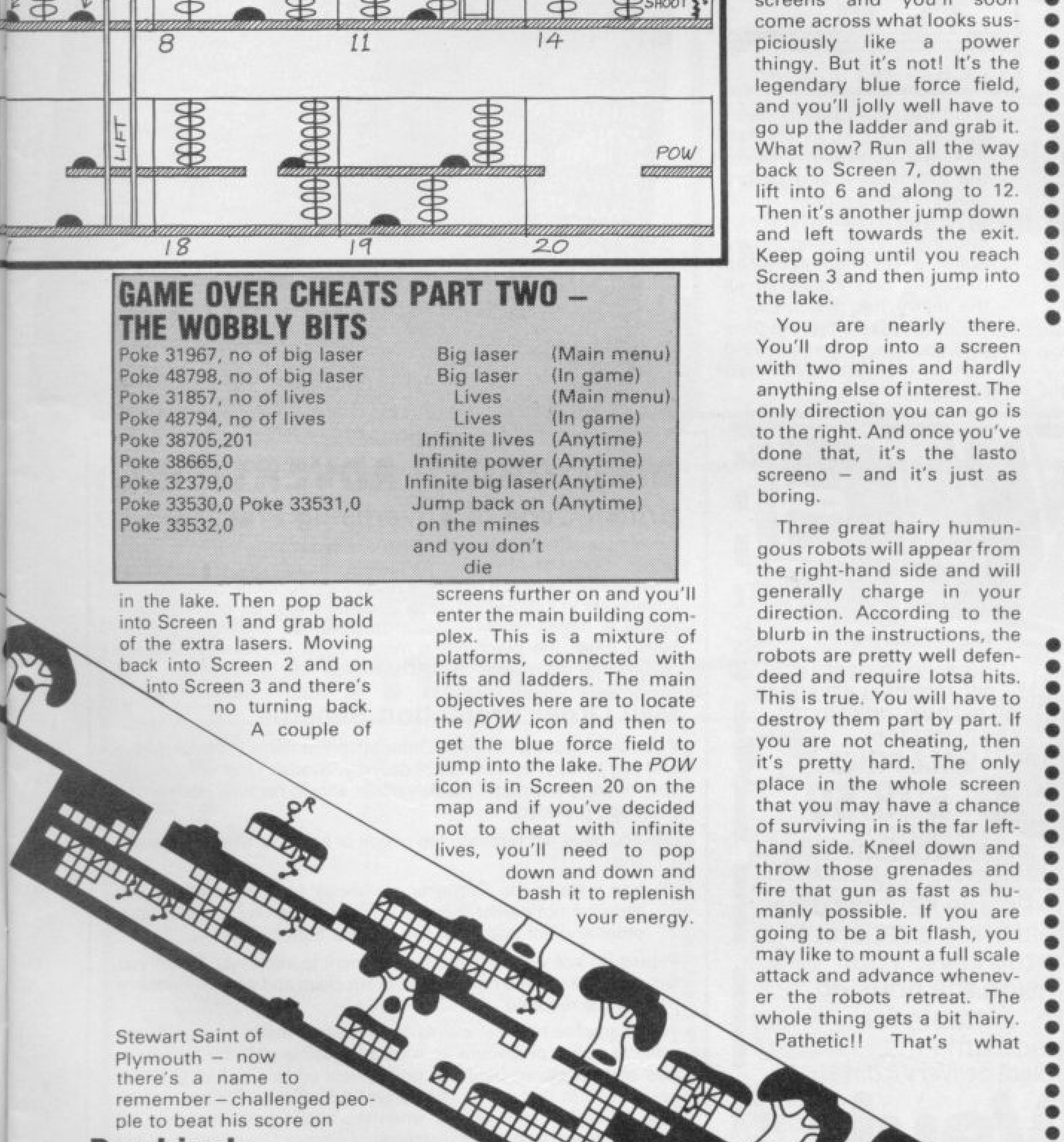
Poke 31967, no of big laser	Big laser	(Main menu)
Poke 48798, no of big laser	Big laser	(In game)
Poke 31857, no of lives	Lives	(Main menu)
Poke 48794, no of lives	Lives	(In game)
Poke 38705,201	Infinite lives	(Anytime)
Poke 38665,0	Infinite power	(Anytime)
Poke 32379,0	Infinite big laser	(Anytime)
Poke 33530,0 Poke 33531,0 Poke 33532,0	Jump back on on the mines and you don't die	(Anytime)

in the lake. Then pop back into Screen 1 and grab hold of the extra lasers. Moving back into Screen 2 and on into Screen 3 and there's no turning back. A couple of screens further on and you'll enter the main building complex. This is a mixture of platforms, connected with lifts and ladders. The main objectives here are to locate the *POW* icon and then to get the blue force field to jump into the lake. The *POW* icon is in Screen 20 on the map and if you've decided not to cheat with infinite lives, you'll need to pop down and down and bash it to replenish your energy.

If you're OK on the energy side, you need to charge off and locate the statue in Screen 15. Enter the screen and stay on the left. Shoot like billyo and wait until you gain a flashing field. This is not the legendary blue force field – oh no! This force field will, however, help you to get the other force field. Confused? Your man should be flashing and this will signal the time to bolt all the way across the playing area to the left-hand screen, that's Screen 6. Now jump on to the lift and go up to Screen 7. This was previously a dead end, but seeing as you've now obtained the force field, you can run onwards to the right. Good oh? Bounce through a couple of screens and you'll soon come across what looks suspiciously like a power thingy. But it's not! It's the legendary blue force field, and you'll jolly well have to go up the ladder and grab it. What now? Run all the way back to Screen 7, down the lift into 6 and along to 12. Then it's another jump down and left towards the exit. Keep going until you reach Screen 3 and then jump into the lake.

You are nearly there. You'll drop into a screen with two mines and hardly anything else of interest. The only direction you can go is to the right. And once you've done that, it's the lasto screeno – and it's just as boring.

Three great hairy humungous robots will appear from the right-hand side and will generally charge in your direction. According to the blurb in the instructions, the robots are pretty well defendeed and require lotsa hits. This is true. You will have to destroy them part by part. If you are not cheating, then it's pretty hard. The only place in the whole screen that you may have a chance of surviving in is the far left-hand side. Kneel down and throw those grenades and fire that gun as fast as humanly possible. If you are going to be a bit flash, you may like to mount a full scale attack and advance whenever the robots retreat. The whole thing gets a bit hairy. Pathetic!! That's what you'll be thinking right at the end. After sweating over the very last screen for a few minutes and successfully blasting the robots back to Sainsbury's, the game will end. And that's it. The tiddly little words 'Game Over' appear and then nothing else happens!! It's an outrage!! Software houses shouldn't be allowed to do it!! Heeuuurghtgh!!!!



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Stewart Saint of Plymouth – now there's a name to remember – challenged people to beat his score on

Bombjack

▲ Ian Palmer from Bracknell has reached the 1,211,240 mark. ■ And Andy Luty reached an amazing 2,396,710! And then there's ■ Paul Hellerick who shot to fame with his 1,844,470.



JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

FANZINE CITY

Quite a few publications dropped through the post this month, and in the end I decided to mention two.

● LIVERMAG is a dedicated Spectrum rag which is compiled and written by Stuart Campbell using the Fleet Street Editor program for the Beeb (there's machine loyalty for ya!). It follows the usual pattern of reviews, news, tips, and is nothing startling to read. However, it is very attractive to look at, being a mixture of computer artwork and different typefaces. It costs 50p with an A4 SAE (24p stamp).

● SPECSCENE has been around for a fair old time now. The chaps have recently published Issue 8 and it costs a paltry 20p. The mag is quite up to date with the review material and is written very chirpily (Well, I couldn't thing of any other word). The guys do seem to copy the style of other magazines though.

Addresses: Livermag, 32 Whitefield Square, Westvale, Kirby, Liverpool. Specscene, 85 Kipling Way, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1TS

If you are after a violent game to pass away the dreary afternoons, then get hold of a copy of Gremlin Graphics' latest offering.

Deathwish III

is perhaps the most violent release this year. All you have to do is march around the city searching for the gang leaders of five riots. When you locate them, you blast them away. Getting in your way as you do this will be hordes of thugs – either carrying guns or clubs.

The key to success in the game is speed. You may locate and blow away a leader, but if you take too long locating the second, the first critter will reappear. Make sure you know how to navigate around the city. Confusion will not help when you are being battered! Don't for heaven's sake, shoot any policeman. If you do, you'll soon be swamped by other policemen trying to get their revenge. Don't worry about the grannies. If your injury rating is rising rapidly, forget what you're doing and run into the shelter of an empty building. Go and make a cup of coffee and wait until all the injury has disappeared. This may take a fair old time and you may emerge to find that all the riots have flared up again!



HIGH SCORES

High scores were what we asked for, and high scores are what we jolly well got. No matter what games it is, although preferably something recent, send you high score into the usual address. I'll mention as many as possible

SPACE HARRIER	6,251,328	Jason Palmer
ENDURO RACER	2,224,458	Jason Palmer
ZYNAPS	53,675	M Williams
ZYNAPS	252,350	David Patience
ZYNAPS	98,000	Jason Palmer
AIRWOLF 2	13,510	Paul Gilham
ZYNAPS	65,375	Tony Cotton
JAILBREAK	262,925	Kingy
ZYNAPS	63,125	Edward Miller
GUNRUNNER	49,360	Edward Miller
ZYNAPS	49,860	Lee Shinwell
EXOLON	105,650	J Staward
GAME OVER	Quite a lot	Jon Riglar
LIVING DAYLIGHTS	120,000	Jason Palmer
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GREAT GURIANOS	153,660	Paul Gilham
NEMESIS	735,000	Paul Gilham



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720°



720° is easily one of the best games we've seen in ages and ages. US Gold has come up trumps, hung a big ten, totally Madonna'd and whatever other sort of things one is supposed to do if you're a skateboarding afficianado.

Yup. It's absolutely great, and if you won't believe me on this evidence alone, why not check out what we said on Page 24 . . .

. . . Back now? OK. So you've learned all about the amazing things you can get up to in USG's conversion from the coin-op. Impressed? We thought you would be. So what's the next step? How can you transform yourself from a middling-to-good skater with a reasonable repartee into the flashest kid on the block? Simple. You get yourself a copy of 720° and practise like crazee. And even if you don't manage to convert the moves you master on the computer version into liquid motion on the street, we think you'll be more than a little bit pleased with your game anyway.

So it's off down to Mrs Miggins Software Emporium with a crisp new tenner in your hand isn't it? And back again with the game and one pound, one pence change?

No. It's not at all. If you're a wise type (as we're sure you are) you'll cut out the coupon here, stick it in an envelope with your name and address attached FIRMLY to a cheque for £7.49 and skitter along to your post office. £7.49? Yes indeed. Not only do you not have to waste the time going to the software shop – valuable time you could spend reading SU or skating, or both – but you get a full £1.50 off the original price.

A bad deal? We think not . . .

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720°

Send coupon (and your name and address) to: 720° Smash Offer, US Gold, Units 2 & 3 Holford Way, Birmingham B6 7AX along with a cheque/postal order made payable to US Gold for £7.49. Offer closes November 30.



SLAINE the King

OK. You've read the comic, you've read the preview, you've seen the review. You've even had the warp spasm. Now, enter the special offer.

Slaine the King is another licence which the unspeakably shrewd people at Martech have picked up right under the noses of some other big fish in the industry (Do fishes have noses? No matter). Anyway, unlike some companies which have the moderately irritating habit of thoroughly mutilating a licence deal to the stage where the character you control on screen bears about as much similarity to your favourite tv/cartoon character as a month-old lettuce, Martech seems to have got the knack of producing a good game that is actually recognisable as a tie-in.

Along with Nemesis the Warlock before it, Slaine gives a slightly different angle on the comic strip character. Where Nemesis was converted into a high quality platform-style game, Slaine gets a little bit of an adventurey treatment.

It's great. But you can find out more by checking out the review on Page 31.

The reason we're telling you about Slaine on this page is to offer you a rather wonderful deal. Simply by cutting out the coupon just here, and sending it off to the address shown, you will be entitled to your very own copy of Slaine delivered, lovingly wrapped in a brown envelope, by mail, for the largely spasmodic price of £7.49 – a full pound-fifty less than your average idiot in the street would have to pay.



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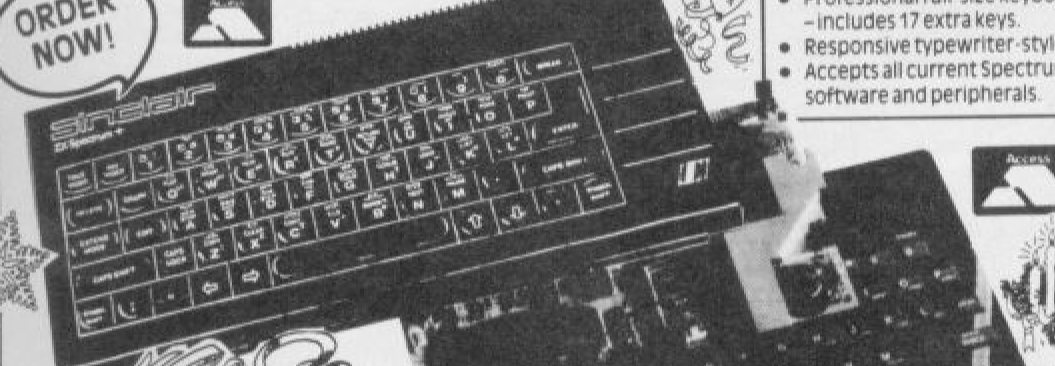
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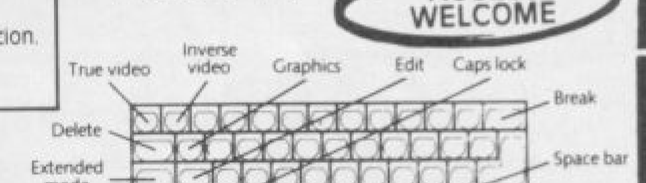
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the official Spectrum Upgrade Kit. The Upgrade has everything you need to turn your Spectrum into the stylish new Spectrum +. You don't even need an understanding of electronics, just the ability to solder a few wires together! The leaflet in the kit gives clear, step by step instructions. If you're not sure about doing it yourself, don't worry. Simply return your 48K Spectrum to us and for **£31.90** + £1.50 p + p we'll upgrade it for you.

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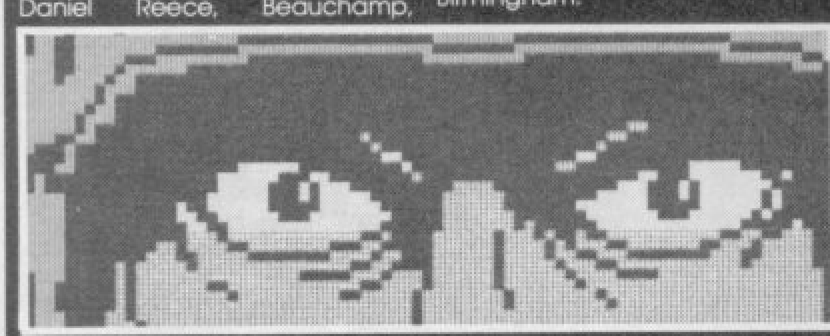
COMPETITION WINNERS

DOC THE DESTROYER

Realising that you, our readers are used to the finer things in life (such as SU), we offered you the chance to have a servant, nay, a slave nonethless. A walking (well, trundling really) talking (well, squeaking really) gripping hands (yeah, that bit's AOK). Chatbot.

And your entries flooded in. It seemed that many of you thought that you were deserving of a bit of domestic help. But only one person of course actually was, and he's Stephen Hemmings from Sifwell in Northampton. Winging its way towards him is one new shiny Chatbot (you mean it can fly as well?), courtesy of Melbourne House.

Not only that, but forty others can trundle off with a copy of the amazing **Doc the Destroyer:** Steven Aspinwall, Harwood, Bolton. William Chong, London, N7. Paul Hutchinson, Thornably, Cleveland. Marcus English, Blofield, Norwich. S. Bradley, Blyth, Northumbria. B. Dickinson, Lowdenbeath, Fife, Scotland. G. Persson, Leith, Edinburgh. Ian Harrison, Penryhyn Bay, Llandudno, Gwynnedd. Alan Clark, Saline, Dunfermline, Fife. Hal Maughan, Thetford, Norfolk. Daniel Reece, Beauchamp, Leicestershire. Paul Hunter, Morecambe, Lancashire. James Williams, Nantwich, Cheshire. Robert Stevens, Basingstoke, Hants. Tom Steer, Bushey, Herts. David Perry, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. Simon Barker, Egham, Surrey. M. Litchfield, Clifton, Nottingham. M. Miller, Portsmouth, Hants. Darren Bunting, Duffield, Derby. John James, Spon End, Coventry. Bill Bennett, Yate, Bristol. Paul Kaylor, Old Trafford, Manchester. Stephen Martin, Palmer's Green, London. Jorge Roacha, Setubal, Portugal. Steven Sanders, Blackpool. Graham Pett, Abingdon, Oxon. M. Cronk, London W11. Matthew Ayres, Southminster, Essex. Steven Noble, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire. Ian Everett, Kings Acre, Hereford. Mark Spain, Denmead, Hants. Jonathan Gazzola, Croxley Green, Herts. Mark Jackson, Driffield, North Humberside. Michael Carter, Kingston Park, Newcastle. Derek Jenkins, Llanishem, Cardiff. Anthony Johnson, Willesden Green, London. Kieran Sampson, East Grinstead, West Sussex. J. Howsam, Wickford, Essex. R. Davidson, West Heath, Birmingham.



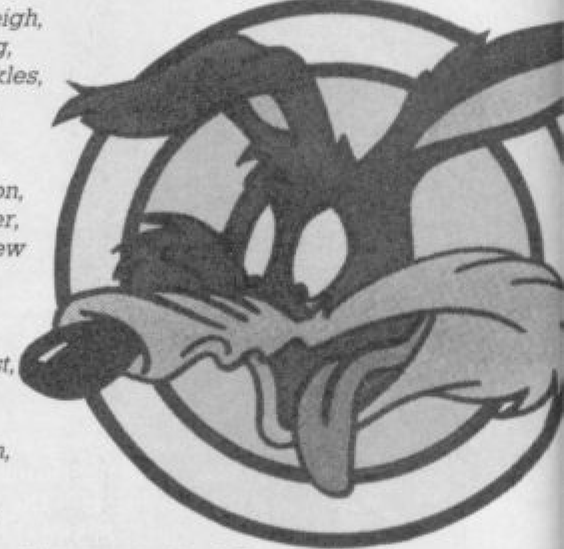
ROADRUNNER

All right, at the risk of sounding appallingly predictable, here goes, BEEP! BEEP!

Yeah, Roadrunner raced into the SU office, bringing a host of goodies with him, and none of them was birdseed! (Thank god, give me a nice steak any day). Any road up, here are the lucky boize who win, starting off with Kevin Chisnall, Hadleigh, Suffolk, who wins a print of RR, While E Coyote and an ACME truck, or something akin.

Then there's fifty games for: Barry Duffield, Eynsham, Oxford. Philip Vaughan, Dingston, Herefordshire. E. Dishan, Moreton, Wirral. John Guthrie, Bolton, Lancashire. Richard Stainsby, Watnall, Notts. Chris Marshall, Littleborough, Lancashire. Kenneth Drybugh, Kockcaldy. Mark Fossey, Palmer's Green, London. Gareth Hughes, Smethwick. Sanjoy Sen, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Someone at 30 Hamilton Road, Sheffield, South Yorks. Chris McGowan, Sutton, Hull. Grant Benjamin, Rushton, Northants. S.W. Smith, Fairfield, Stockton. Kevin Downham, Worsley Mesnes, Wigan. Kenneth Gibson, Minnigaff, Wigtownshire. L. Smith, Hull. Darren Meeks, High Wycombe, Bucks. Derek Glenn, Fiberdeen, Scotland. Alexander Guy, Clwyd, Wales. Catherine Hirst, Leeds. David Tolliday, York, Yorkshire. Seamus O'Brien, Lodoregal, Eire. Tobias Olofsson, Lidingo, Sweden. Desmond Willcocks, County Down, Northern Ireland.

And the following twenty five people will speed away with posters: Scott Denyer, Corringham, Essex. Nick Watford, Colchester, Essex. Kirsyin Erim, Ankara, Turkey. Michael Davies, Heywood. Michael Roberts, Leigh, Lancashire. Lee Brodley, Brigg, South Humberside. David Buckles, Sudbury, Suffolk. Ian Robson, Warrington, Cheshire. Gavin Orland, Abington Vale, Northampton. Graeme Atkinson, Carlton, Nottingham. B.J. Carter, Bethnal Green, London. Andrew Brocklehurst, Northwick, Cheshire. S. Collinge, Sundenshaw, Manchester. Andrew Webb, Haverfordwest, Dyfed. Allan Millar, Paisley, Scotland. Stephen Wilson, Loughton, Essex. Alex Watson, Romford, Essex. R. Sable, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Barry Lincoln, County Down, Northern Ireland. Julian Zubreczki. Mark Govier, Peterlee, County Durham. Darren Judge, Newtown, Birmingham. A. Brooker, Chelmsford, Essex. richard Talboys, Dursley, Gloucs. Katherine van Tilburg, St Carlisle, Cumbria.



THING ON A SPRING

They said it was the easiest competition we'd ever run. They said it was silly. They said we ought to come up with something to tax the old brain cells a bit more. They said that it was an insult to their intelligence. Didn't stop them entering though, did it?

Yup, tzoing, Thing on a Spring was twanging success, and the lucky prize winners are as follows: Ten first prize winners, who receive a copy of the fame and an incredible, amazing extraordinary slinky spring (whatever that may be) are: R. Munroe, Compenthorpe, York. T. Saunders, Wellingborough, Northants. D. Sharpe, Grantham, Lincolnshire. .. Watkins, Amersham, Bucks. N. Radford, Hucknall, Nottingham. E.J. Christie, Kemnay, Aberdeenshire. R. Jepson, Scholes, Rotherham. Delwyn Jones, Anglesey, North Wales. Matthew Hoghes, Banbury, Oxon.

Fifteen runners up who each receive a copy of the game are: S. Thorling, Lowestoft, Suffolkj. J. Tender Mah, Brierly Hill, West Midlands. P. Stanton, Wembley, Middlesex. R. Loga, Woodpark, London, NW8. C. Thompson, Baliemedie, Aberdeen. J. Veale, Bromsgrove. J. Dunlop, Greenfield, Glasgow. N. Gueric, Tipperary, Ireland. G.M. Alcock, Sketty Park, Swansea. David Taylor, Claughton, Birkenhead. R. Ley, Luton, Beds. Paul Dixon, Swanley, Kent. H. Henley, Luton, Beds. M. Camp, Wednesfield, West Midlands. K. Shackleton, Southill, Weymouth.

And an incredible one hundred runners up bounce off with Thing on a Spring of their very, very own! A. Lockheart, East Grinstead, Sussex. J. Dale, Macclesfield, Cheshire. H. Harper, Hitchin, Herts. Jacky Garnett, Mold, Clwyd. Norman Veitch, Sunderland, Tyne and ear. A. Lambert, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. Jinay Shah, Mitcham, Surrey. C. Punter, Kennoway, Fife. D. Batcheler, Retford, Notts. D. Armitage, Bradford, West Yorks. James Yusef, Bows, London. A. Newborn, Burnham on Sea, Somerset. Kevin Hart, Rochester, Kent. Karen Jones, Wrexham, Clwyd. J. Pierce, Woodenborough, Sandwich, Kent. Brian Stewart, Scunthorpe, South Humberside. Andrew Walker, Daventry, Northants. Christopher Dagg, East Lothian, Scotland. Paul Garner, Wombwell, Barnsley. Darrian Roebuck, Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Andrew Webb, Haverfordwest, Dyffed. Alan Brown, East Lothian, Scotland. Stuart Thompson, Kedington, Haverhill, Suffolk. J. Sembi, Maidenhead, Berks. C. Dalton, St Bootle, Liverpool. T. Davies, Mansfield, Notts. Stephen Wilson, Loughton, Essex. Steve Caple, Crewe, Cheshire. Ben Richardson, Greenford. Kevin Brown, Ashby, Scunthorpe. John Carr, Feltham, Middlesex. Jason Hughes, Deeside, Clwyd. David Swarreck, Leeds. Nathan Clare, Great Boughton, Chester. M. Downson, Portsmouth, Hants. Sanjoy Sen, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Mark Baker, Suffolk. Simon Matthews, Bespark. Chris Marshall, Littleborough, Lancs. Dave Hunt, Feltham, Middlesex. John Stringer, Manor Estate, Sheffiled. David Clifford, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Shane Evans, Port Talbot, West Glamorgan. Angus Moir, Beccles, Suffolk. Scott Billinceley, Liverpool. Steven Houston, Newtonards, County Down, Northern Ireland. M. Sosin, Great Barrow, Chelmsford. Neil Calon, Thamesmead. Greg Jones, Little Over, Derby. Malcolm McKenzie, Bury, Lancashire. Jonathan O'Shea, Enton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne. Shaun Hill, Faversham, Kent. Robert Goodman, Portmadog, Gwynned. Jorgen Jacobsen, Glostrup, Denmark. Andrew wormald, Guildford, Surrey. J. Miller, Dundee. G. McDougall, Hall Green, Birmingham. Wayne Moore, Castleford. Mark Mcfierman, Barrhead, Glasgow, Paul Scott, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent. Steven Baynes, Bishop Auckland, West Durham. M.C. Ming, Alvaston, Derby. R. Davidson, Birmingham. Nigel Fisher, London, SE15. Guy Cott, Appleby, Cumbria. D.J. Harvey, Bar Hill, Cambs. Barnaby Yates, Northfarmbridge, Essex. A. Chardcastle, Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Morton Gohn, Drammen, Norway. Robert Mortimer, Kendal, Cumbria. Nathaniel Reade, Charlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester. S. Nadin, Haywards Heath, Sussex. M.L. Ashley, Sprowston, Norfolk. James Freshwater, Codsall, Staffs. Imran Ifitkhar, Faisal Abad, Pakistan. Chris Rankin, Washington, TYne and Wear. robert Dowler, Bargoed, Mid Glamorgan. A.D. Jackson, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. Russ Pogan, Rowdon, Cheshire. Graham White, Hastings, East Sussex. Paul Wilson, Farlington, York. Robert Wood, Goole, North Humberside. Vincent Ball, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. David Plummer, Dalston, London. John Little, Haverton, Chester. Alan Diss, Rubery, Birmingham. James Finch, Sawbridgeworth, Herts. Philip Brown, Barkins, Essex. M. Butler, Eastbourne. Sean Tansey, West Bridgeford, Notts. John Hetherington, Huntington, Chester. R.G. Armstrong, Stourbridge, West Midlands. O. Lynch, Hightown. Ryan Nash, Leeds, Yorkshire. M.P. Clark, Knowle, Bristol. A. Wales, Northwich, Cheshire. Mary Roberts, Fish Ponds, Bristol. John MacLean, Bearsden, Glasgow. Jeff Logaw, Tipton, West Midlands. P.J. Newton, St Sherwood, Nottingham.

ARCADE REVIEW

ACTION FORCE

Action Force are sort of bendy toys in balaclavas, and you can imagine the sort of gung-ho game that that's likely to produce. And you'd be right, more or less.

The idea of the game is to get a jeep full of boffins from one end of a war-torn, trouble-ridden island to the other so they can decode the computers and stuff the evil enemy. (The plot, you may have noticed, is both unoriginal and unappealing, but don't let that worry you.)



Now. You're not driving the jeep. The boffins are doing that. (They can't be that boffinish if they can drive, never saw Uncle Quentin drive so much as a moped did you?) In fact, you're not even in the jeep at all. You are in the air, because you play the character of Snake's Eyes, and he's a pretty tough sharp shooter so he gets to jet about in a jet pack thingy!!

What happens is this. The jeep needs protection (the cannon having been taken off the back of it in case the boffins shoot themselves in the foot. It's up to you to clear a path across the island for the jeep, dodging the ground to air missiles, shooting the funny yellow things with numbers in them that lurk in the background for no apparent reason other than to get in your way and increase your score. Every now and then you'll come across a little package that contains fuel and ammunition. Useful items to collect, these.

In between picking up bits and bobs and mowing down things, you have to make sure that the jeep is keeping up. It has one or two problems with life.

And since it's strictly a floating jeep, getting it across the water is only possible only by shifting pontoon bridges around the place. You have to fly about, dodging rockets, locate a pontoon bridge, pick it up (no easy task that) and then drop it in front of the jeep which will obligingly trundle on to it and wait patiently for the next one. Treat the jeep rather like a backward two-year old and you'll get on famously.

As you carry on through the eight increasingly tricky levels, scrolling your way gently left to right, things get increasingly sticky and that jeep starts to become a real pain in the neck. You're trying to blow up a pylon, and you can't get any further than point X because the jeep is straining at the bit, stuck on some pontoon somewhere. The temptation to push it in the water is indescribable.

Apart from that, **Action Force** is very good. It's incredibly hard, and marvellously addictive. It looks wonderful too. The graphics are smooth and clear, and there's hardly any trace of attribute clash.

The scenery changes as the levels progress. You start off with towers and burnt out buildings, surrounded by water, and progress to palm trees, deserts and pylons. The things to dodge change too. From big rockets to massive electricity generators, to pylons to rogue electric currents.

The programming was done by the same people who did **Rebel** for Virgin, and it shows. **Rebel** looked big, bold and sharp, and so does **Action Force.** It's one hell of a good game■

FACTS BOX

Complex, fast moving arcade action that's going to take a long time to master. Great to look at and great to play

ACTION FORCE
Label: Virgin
Authors: Martin Wheeler, Link Tomlin
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Price: £7.95

Reviewer: *Tamara Howard*

★★★★☆
★★★★★ **9**



PROGRAMMERS

Two of Virgin's in-house Gang of Five team worked on **Action Force.**

MARTIN WHEELER: responsible for most of the game design and the crystal-clear graphics. He joined Virgin, aged 14, and wrote the chart topping **Sorcery.**

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Sorcery** (*Virgin*, 1985), **Dan Dare** *graphics* (*Virgin*, 1986), **Falcon** *graphics* (*Virgin*, 1987), **Rebel** (*Virgin*, 1987)

LINK TOMLIN: helped Martin with the game design and did most of the actual coding.

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Scrabble** *PCW8256 and Macintosh versions* (*Virgin*, 1986), **Rebel** (*Virgin*, 1987)

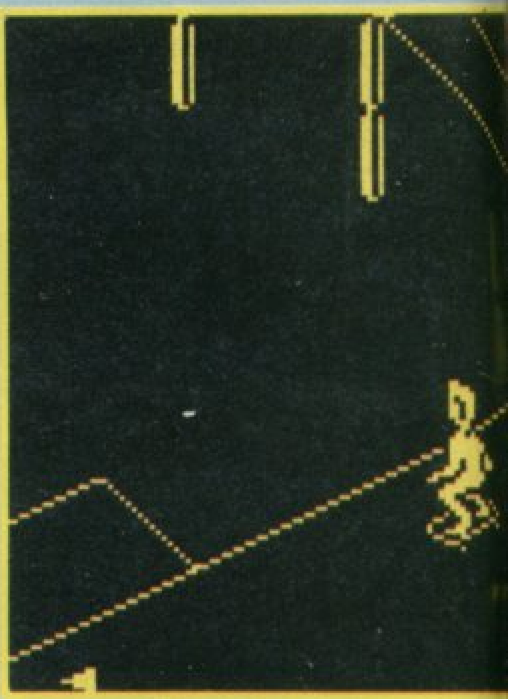


SOFTWARE STAR RATINGS

★	Avoid this game under all circumstances
★★	Poor and/or massively overpriced
★★★	Dull and uninteresting, if not actually awful
★★★★	Fairly average. Nothing to get excited about
★★★★★	OK but nothing special
★★★★★★	Not bad, some good points. See before you buy
★★★★★★★	Pretty good. We were quite impressed. Worth a look
★★★★★★★★	Good stuff. Well worth the money
★★★★★★★★★	Very good indeed. A must buy
★★★★★★★★★★	Brilliant. Must buy at all costs
Classic	The best program of its type we've seen to date

ARCADE REVIEW · TOOL-KIT REVIEW · STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW · ADVENTURE REVIEW · WORK-OUT REVIEW





If you like skateboarding in real life, you'll go absolutely beserk over US Gold's conversion of the Atari coin-op, **720°**.

And if you think the art of standing on a piece of plastic and zooming along with your arms in the air is rather silly, you'll love it anyway, because it's such a splendid piece of games programming.

I admit I fall into the latter category, and really don't have a great deal of time for the charmers to be found in a local shopping precinct who skitter past on at an alarming rate claiming to have just 'totally penned-out by Waitrose'. But **720°** is such an immensely playable game all my cynicism went to the wall within seconds of play commencing.

The gameplay incorporates four very simple controls. You can rotate left and right, kick (which speeds you up) and jump. The beauty of **720°** is that you can combine these moves into wonderfully complex sequences which will be awarded with bonus points by the computer.

The screen is laid out in isometric 3D, and everything in the play area is either black or yellow. No worries here attribute-wise, although your character is a little non-descript in the facial department.

You begin the game in the centre of Skate City, an enormous tarmac plane incorporating skate-ways, ramps, jumps and pools of water. As the name suggests, you can skate anywhere in Skate City (except through pools of water). At each of the four corners of the city is a Skate Park; a sub-game where bonus points and cash prizes can be earned for performing tougher feats on the board.

There's Slalom Park where you've got to weave your way through sets of flags which descending on a pretty steep ramp. Jump Park forces you to perform spine-jarring leaps while not falling into the water. Ramp Park involves skating through a half-pipe, reaching higher and higher each time. And Downhill Park is simply a race, er, downhill.

720° is a face against time from start to finish. The aim is to perform enough tricks to win a ticket to a skate-park, before the timer runs out.

And once you're in the park, you've got a limited number of seconds to rack up as many points as possible.

In order to gee you up a little, and to prevent smart-alecs from simply performing jumps in extremely safe areas, scoring more points than they're really earning, a swarm of killer bees has been created. As soon as the ominous message 'Skate or Die' flashes on to the screen, you know you're in trouble. A couple of seconds later the ghastly swarm will appear, and proceeds to chase you around the screen until you either give it the slip or become enveloped and get stung to death.

Being a fairly Bohemian sort



PROGRAMMERS

TIERTEX may not be a name you've come across before, but a brief look at the Manchester firm's Softography will indicate its calibre. **John Prince** and **Donald Campbell** make up the firm. John has a PhD in physics and is aged between 25 and 33 and Donald is 24 and has a masters degree in electronics.

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Ace of Aces** (*US Gold*, 1987), **10th Frame** (*US Gold*, 1987), **Goonies** (*US Gold*, 1987), **720°** (*US Gold*, 1987)







HINTS AND TIPS

- Go crazy! Skate like there's no tomorrow! Jump and turn as many times as possible on your way to any destination. You'll score a couple of hundred points each time
- Don't be afraid to skate backwards. You seem to be able to avoid the bees more easily this way
- Skate around on the slightly raised walkways, as divvy bikers only ride on the paths
- Collect every dollar bill you see on the ground, as even if you don't need it to buy equipment, you'll get bonus points for the amount you've got in your pocket at the end of each stage
- Make sure you land correctly (straight) after a jump, as more points will be awarded

FACTS BOX

Virtually flawless arcade game. Addictive, smooth and slick. Easily US Gold's finest hour. Don't miss this one

720°
Label: US Gold
Authors: TIERTEX
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

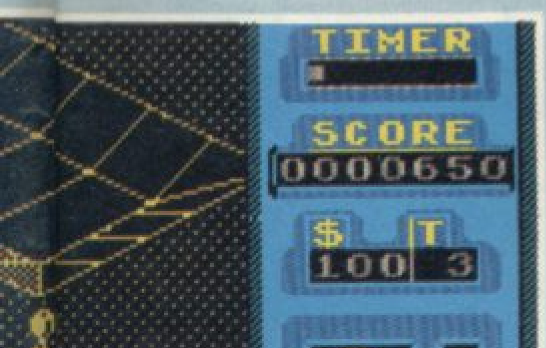
★★★★★★★★★★ 10

ARCADE REVIEW

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC



720°



of place, Skate City has dollar bills lying around on the floor. You can collect the bills by skating over them. Once you've collected enough money, you could do a lot worse than glide over to one of the shops in the park and picking up an accessory.

Accessories come in the form of pads, helmets, shoes and new boards. Each will help you along the way to becoming the slickest skater in the city. Boards offer higher speeds, shoes better start-times and higher dumps, pads mean you can get up after a fall slightly more quickly and helmets will permit more dangerous aerobatics to be attempted.

As you may have already guessed, you are not altogether alone in **720°**. There are all sorts of other weirdos who inhabit the city – muscle-men, idiots on unicycles and utterly deranged bikers. All of these will cause you to come off your board and graze yourself with varying degrees of seriousness. Wipe your chops too many times on the old concrete hanky and it's off to intensive care for you.

The joy of the game is in the way you can perfect your moves. You can spend ages just fiddling around, not doing anything particularly useful, just getting the feel of the board and having a great time.

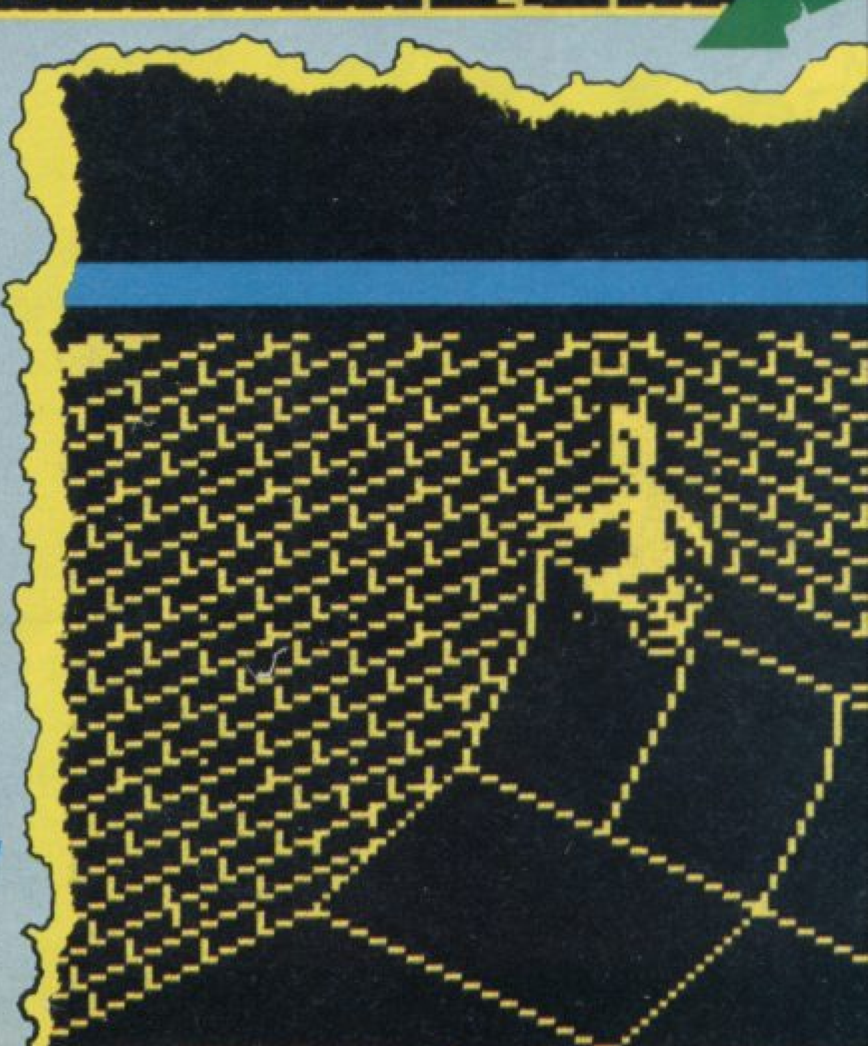
Once you've got the hang of scooting around on the training level, you can try out the more advanced, and logically titled Advanced Level.

Here things get a little more sticky. Bees crop up more frequently, and there are more lunatic bike riders, body-builders and the like.

720° is the epitome of a Classic. It's got every element of a great game.

The graphics are interesting, the action is pitched at exactly the correct level and it's got playability of astonishing flexibility.

Did we flip over it? You bet! ■




RED L.E.D.
RED L.E.D. IS A CHALLENGE NOT TO BE MISSED. – COMMODORE USER
"GO OUT AND GET THIS GAME – IT'S SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL!" – JULIAN RIGNALL: ZAPP 64
C.U. Screen Star
SIZZLER
REAL ARCADE ACTION AT ITS BEST!
The year is 2379: Earth's vast resources are finally running out (again!). You must bridge the path to the much needed matter supplies, using three ZMX all-purpose battle-droids to link up the vital cosmic-interlace grid.
SPECIAL FEATURES:
• Full 3D smooth scrolling action
• 37 different landscapes
• Bonus levels, teleport pads and enemy generators
• Graphics by Pete James
• Sound FX by Tony Crowther.
STARLIGHT SOFTWARE
C64/128 cass £9.99 C64/128 disk £12.99 AMSTRAD cass £9.99 AMSTRAD disk £14.99 SPECTRUM £8.99

20 Pokes FREE

They said it couldn't be done. They said it shouldn't be done. But we've gone and done it anyway.

Newsagents began to construct barricades to prevent the anticipated destruction of their shops.

Software companies panicked in the knowledge that last time something like this happened everyone miraculously managed to beat the pants off just about every game worth looking at.

But we know that you've been clamouring for the second part of our poke festival ever since the initial offer way back in June.

And so, we proudly present another, the second great SU Poke Card Offer. How many pokes are we giving away? Go on, ask me. Ten? Pah! Fifteen? No way Jose! This is your chance to get hold of another TWENTY cards.

Each one has been hand crafted from finest Bulgarian cardboard, coloured using only the finest Celtic Crayons by Mr Jones The Designer himself, lovingly sealed into the little plastic bag on the front of the magazine by experts in particle physics and sticky-tape-sticking. And most importantly of all, all of the pokes were produced by Mr Poke himself – Adrian Singh, who magics up the pokes featured regularly on this page. And they're numbered from 21 to 40 – so you can keep them as a set with the last lot.

And it doesn't matter if you've never seen a Poke Card in your life before today. We bear no grudges. A poke card is an utterly idiot-proof way of cheating at your favourite game. All you have to do is type in the listing on the back of the appropriate card, *Run* it, and then load in the game tape from the start as normal. As soon as it's loaded, you'll be able to take on the alien forces, race round the track, jump higher, live forever shoot all the time etc, etc. In fact, you'll be able to do just about anything. Just check out the table opposite to see which poke does what.





Card 21 Sidewize	Infinite lives
Card 22 Road Runner	Gives unlimited energy and stops the counter.
Card 23 Saboteur II	Infinite lives/ Invincibility
Card 24 Transmuter	Invincibility
Card 25 Wizball	Invincibility
Card 26 Renegade	Infinite lives
Card 27 Athena	Infinite lives and stops the clock
Card 28 Joe Blade	Menu-driven game teaking!
Card 29 I, Ball	Infinite time and invincibility
Card 30 Ultima Ratio	Infinite lives and ammo
Card 31 Plexar	Infinite lives
Card 32 Wolfan	Infinite lives
Card 33 Bubble Bobble	Invincibility (both players)
Card 34 Curse of Sherwood	Invincibility and infinite lives
Card 35 Motos	Infinite lives
Card 36 Stormbringer	Infinite strength
Card 37 MASK	Invincible
Card 38 How to be a Complete...	Unlimited power
Card 39 Back to the Future	Unlimited lifeforce
Card 40 Super Sprint	Always qualify for next track

Of course, being the kind of acutely intelligent and perceptive smoothy that reads SU on a regular basis, you'll have realised that you have only received ten cards in the packet on this issue. Don't panic. You're bound to have got a couple of cards that you don't really need in your packet, in which case, follow Plan A.

PLAN A You can bet your life that your mate will have the card that you want more than anything in the world. What to do? Swap. Give him or her one of the cards that's not much use to you, and pick up that illusive poke you've been after for months.

If your friend doesn't co-operate, we suggest you hit him or her over the head with a chair and follow either Plan B or Plan C.

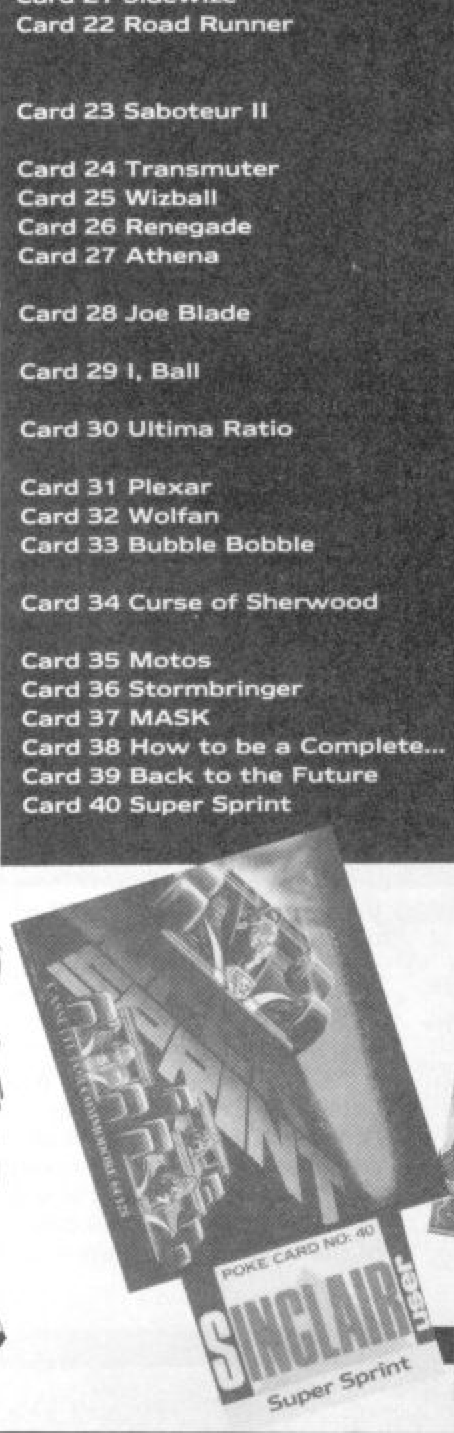
PLAN B Buy a few more copies of SU. They're only a pound a go and, if you buy enough copies you're certain to find the cards you want...

PLAN C If for some reason Plan B doesn't appeal just cut out the coupons from this (below) SU and next month's mag, fill in the details on the form in next month's SU of which cards you want and send the lot, together with a stamped addressed envelope to our Peterborough address. BUT remember, DON'T send anything yet. You must send the coupons from both this and next month's issues■

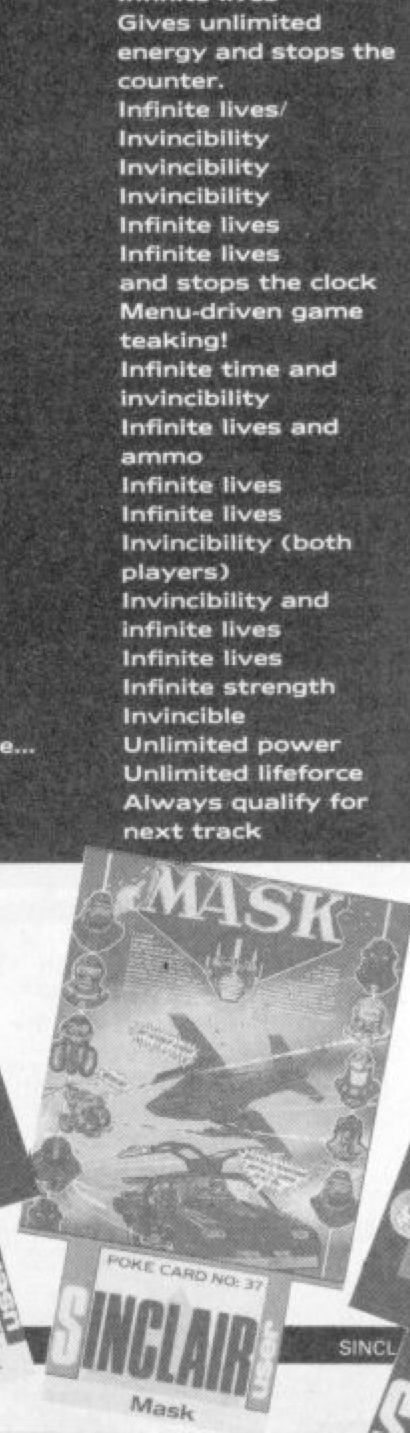
DVS

what we have in **Bosconian** is a very tidy little shoot-em-up.

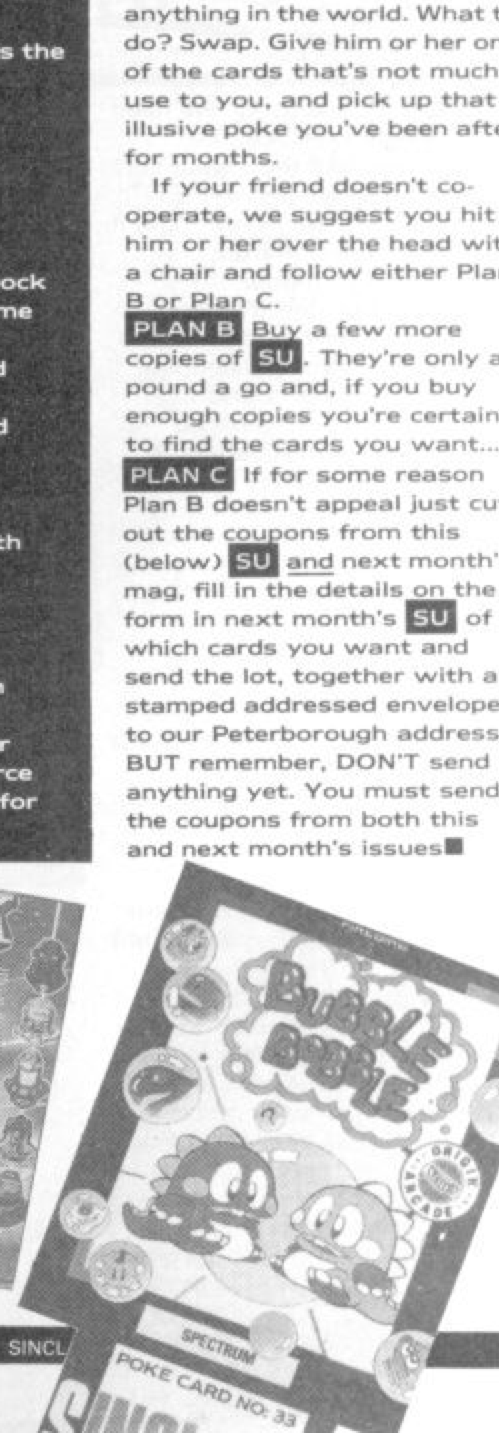
Last month we mentioned that **Bosconian** didn't really have a storyline. And that still stands. All you need to know is that this game requires no great amount of thought almost no instructions (just blast, blast, blast), and a truly serious amount of joystick twizzling.



Super Sprint



Mask



INDIANA JONES & THE

It's true Indy looks like Desperate Dan. It's true everybody including Indy adopts the same dazed crumpled expression. And it's true some of the time you die for completely unfair reasons.

But it doesn't matter. **Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom** is an excellent conversion – just about as good as is possible, I reckon.

The coin-op has been out a while now and there are plenty of people out there well experienced in whipping the odd Thuggee and ascending the odd rock face. Those people won't be disappointed. This is at least as exciting as the original.

There are three sections to the game roughly related to sections in the film. Though it's fiendishly difficult to get through each section it is possible to move between them without actually completing each one. For example, in Part 1 you have to release nine urchins from cruel tiny cages for maximum points. It's actually quite possible to move on to the trolley ride in Part 2 whilst leaving the urchins to suffer. A shame but life is hard.

Part 1 sets the pace for the rest of the game. Indiana releases (or not) the children from their cages. He also whips the Thugee guards who fall to the ground in a dazed state. By whipping them a bit more, he can send them hurtling over the side of a convenient rock face.

In Part 2 Indiana leaps in to a mine quarry-truck and has to steer it over a rail system even more unreliable than the Fenchurch Street line by leaning in the right direction at the right moments. At the same time he has to use his whip to smash passing rocks and bats.

Then, in Part 3, Indy has to grab the Sankara Stone by battling his way over a molten pit. Lots of dodging and careful timing required here. Once grabbed the stone has to be deposited at the feet of Kali, a well known Goddess of death. To actually complete the entire thing Indy has to deliver three such stones, whereupon he escapes over a rope bridge

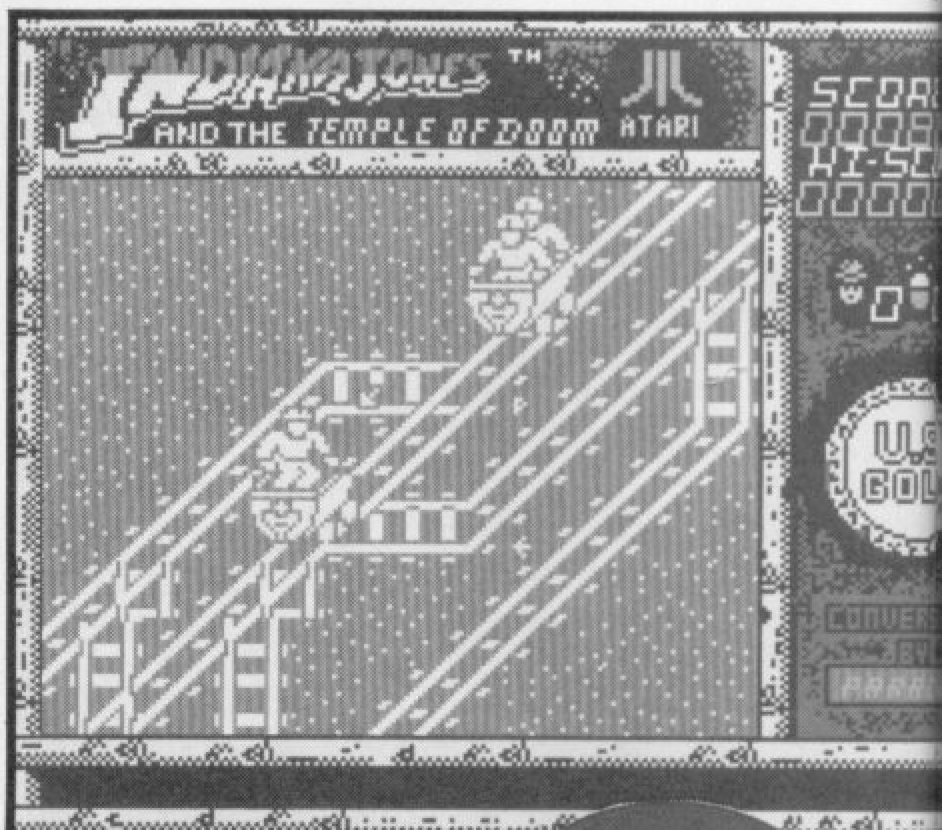
FACTS BOX

Excellent conversion. Some quibbles because of colour problems but basically highly recommended

INDIANA JONES
Label: US Gold
Author: Tiertex
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Price: £8.99

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★☆ 9



RED LED

OK folks, what do we need right now? Let me rephrase that: what sort of game can we just not do without? Yup, that's right, got it in one. Another **Marble Madness** type game.

What originality. What a straggler! And I thought it was *last* year everyone was doing **Marble Madness** copies . . .

I have to admit, though, that this particular **MM** varient is almost redeemed by some really nice touches. But only almost.

Before sussing out the game itself, a word about the pseudo story that opens the instructionssheet, all about Bertram the Bold, fearless android warrior. Skip it. Leap it at a single bound. Ignore it. It's junk.

Apart from the usual terrain hazards, there are various unfriendly robots zipping around. You have a zapper which you can despatch them with – otherwise they crash into you.

Various tools are dotted about the landscape which can help you complete your task. Ice Switches turn the acid lakes to ice, so you can walk on them; Time Switches alter the clock (can be either good or bad); Teleport Pads teleport you; Droid Freezes stop enemy droids for a time; Smart Bombs kill everything near you; Enemy Droid Generators generate enemy droids, and if you can destroy them there won't be any more on this level; and the letters that are lying around spell out bonus, which is what you get if you collect them all and complete the level.

The only really big difference between this and other **Marble Madness** clones is that you have the choice of controlling one of three different battle droids at a time. Each supposedly has different skills and abilities, but I haven't been able to work out what the differences are yet.

The graphics are reasonable enough, but disappointing compared to other games of the same genre. They seem to lack a certain definition that you get in some others. The animations of the central characters – your





FACTS BOX

If you loved Marble Madness and couldn't get enough of it, then you'll probably love this MM clone – faults and all

RED LED
Label: Starlight
Price: £8.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various



TEMPLE OF DOOM



ARCADE REVIEW

which, of course, can only be described as ropey.

The game is – it must be said – fiendishly difficult and stage one is not *necessarily* the easiest level.

You need to react incredibly quickly to whip the Thugee and, conversely, if you try to do anything other than whip them you will fail – they appear to run faster than you.

There's also this bearded firebomber, who's another major problem. If you don't get yourself in the right whipping position at once it's no more sequels for you. Again, you can't run away – the bomb comes after you.

There is, however, a problem with at least one aspect of the gameplay on this Spectrum version. Inevitably the programmers have opted for a two-colour display, rather than have Indy changing colour to match the background all over the place. They opted for black and white. It looks pretty good, very good even. The trouble is some of the time you just can't see what's happening as white sprites mingle into white backgrounds – it's not nearly as bad as, say, **Slap Fight** but I'd say at least one life lost in every five wasn't my crummy playing technique.

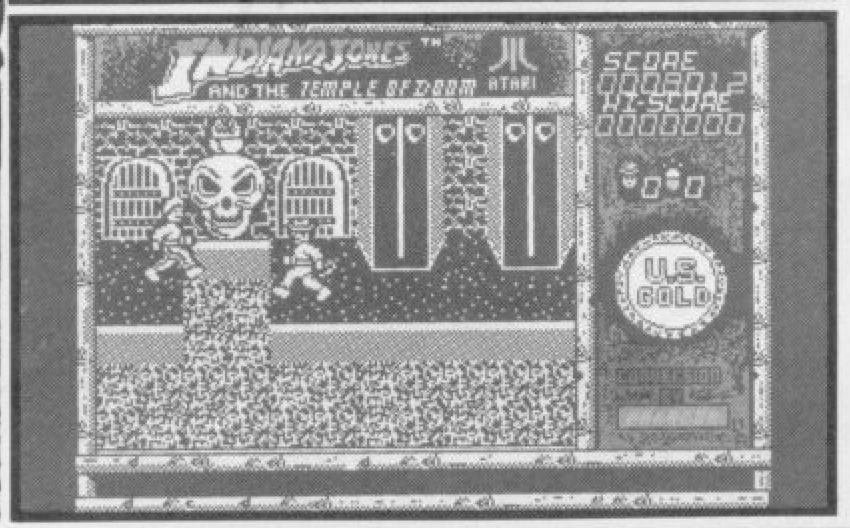
Despite the odd gameplay quibble, **Indiana** looks excellent. It's possible to mock the sprites for being a bit samey and not looking like the real thing but they are still quite a programming achievement. The backgrounds are excellent particularly in the opening section.

If you've been playing the arcade game and waiting the conversion, fear not, they've done you proud■

PROGRAMMERS

TIERTEX may not be a name you've come across before, but a brief look at the Manchester firm's Softography will indicate its calibre. **John Prince** and **Donald Campbell** make up the firm. John has a PhD in physics and is aged between 25 and 33 and Donald is 24 and has a masters degree in electronics.

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Ace of Aces** (*US Gold*, 1987), **10th Frame** (*US Gold*, 1987), **Goonies** (*US Gold*, 1987), **Indiana Jones** (*US Gold*, 1987)



BOSCONIAN

Browsing along the software shelves, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Mastertronic's **Bosconian** is just another third-rate shoot 'em up, and leave well alone.

Well, pull your finger out matey, dig out two of the little gold jobs, give them to the nice person at the counter and get **Bosconian** home ASAP. It's great.

Bosconian is a coin-op conversion, but it's a very old coin-op, dating back, to around 1981. And I don't know about you but I was still chewing my Farley's Rusks at that moment in time. So it's not likely that you're going to remember it terribly well. Still, that doesn't really matter, conversion aside, what we have in **Bosconian** is a very tidy little shoot-em-up.



Last month we mentioned that **Bosconian** didn't really have a storyline. And that still stands. All you need to know is that this game requires no great amount of thought almost no instructions (just blast, blast, blast), and a truly serious amount of joystick twizzling.

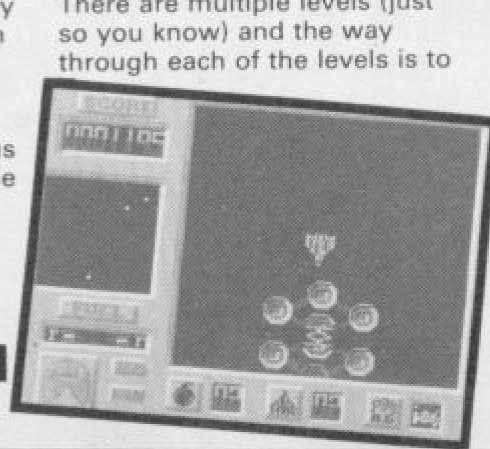
You control a moderate sort of spaceship that can gradually be expanded into a super high power sort of spaceship.

Aforementioned spaceship can be refueled and generally titivated by driving over various icons, bombs, fuel cans and the such like. These seem to be carelessly littered around the cosmos.

And that's about it really. There are multiple levels (just so you know) and the way through each of the levels is to blow up all the space stations, before they blow you.

Level two looks much like level one, various static objects linger, hoping you're going to bump into them, and the odd fighter wave will attack, but since you've got an advance warning system, all you have to do is spin round and round in circles firing a hail of bullets and they'll soon naff off.

Bosconian is great entertainment, it looks more like a full price game, and that you can put down to the fact that it's been done by Binary Design (**Zub, Amaurote**). And it's got pretty swizzy 128K music and explosion noises too■



FACTS BOX

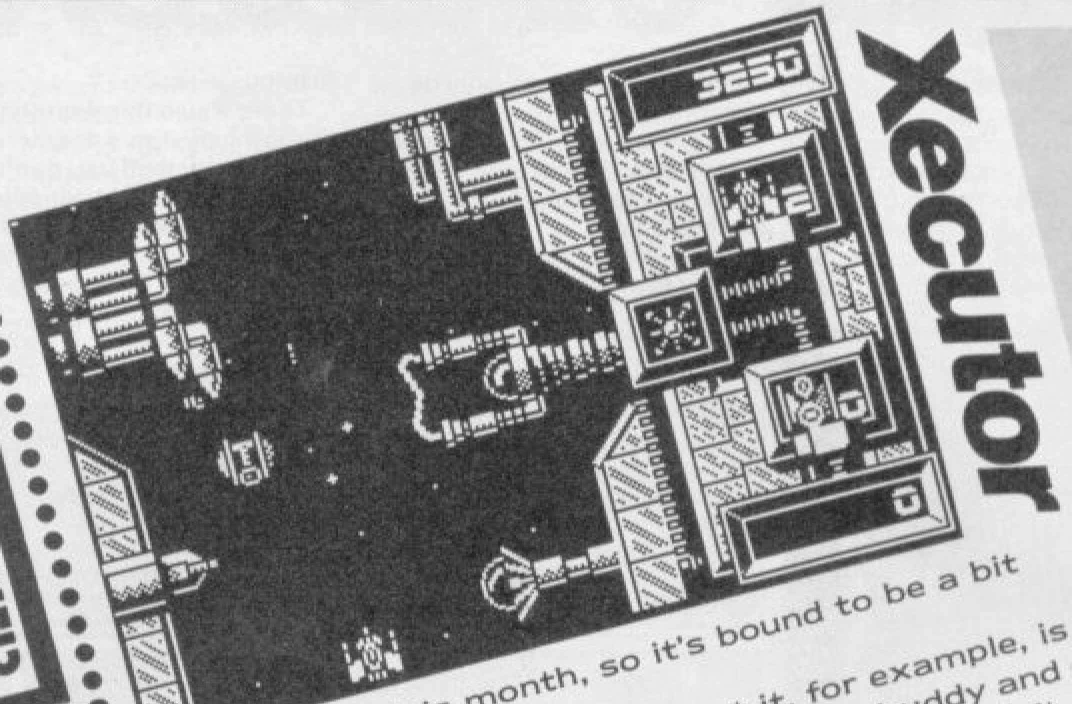
BOSCONIAN
Label: Mastertronic
Reviewer:
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Sinclair, Kempston
Author: Binary Design

Brilliant budget alien killer. Looks and plays like a full price game. Definitely one to take notice of

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

£1·00 OFF
SU SMASH OFFER
XECUTOR
Send coupon to: Xecutor Smash Offer, Ace Software, Softek International, 36/38 Southampton Street, London WC2 7HE along with a cheque/postal order for £6.99 made payable to Softek International



Xecutor

OK, you've taken on more alien squadrons than you care to remember. You've overtaken prison ships on the outskirts of the Orion Nebula and you've flown out of the sun hurling laserfire at defenceless cargo ships. All single-handed. Well, now is the time to take on a force so powerful that even a hardened starfighter like yourself couldn't handle alone. Xecutor, from Ace is the finest game we've seen this month (well actually, we though Wizball was fine, too).

Let's face it Xecutor made it on to the SU cover this month, so it's bound to be a bit special.

One special thing about it, for example, is the way you can team up with a buddy and go into situations that a single pilot wouldn't have a hope of surviving.

And in praise of such a noble sort of game, we're going to follow Ace's example and help out anyone who wants to get hold of a copy. Simply snip out the coupon here and send it off to the address shown, and you'll be granted a whole £1.00 off the game.

And if you find it hard to believe that Xecutor is worth £6.45 you're mad. Just look on page 24■

RENEGADE

IT'S great. It's Ocean's superb conversion of the Taito coin-op which was recently widely acclaimed as the most addictive, exciting and downright tricky arcade game for ages.

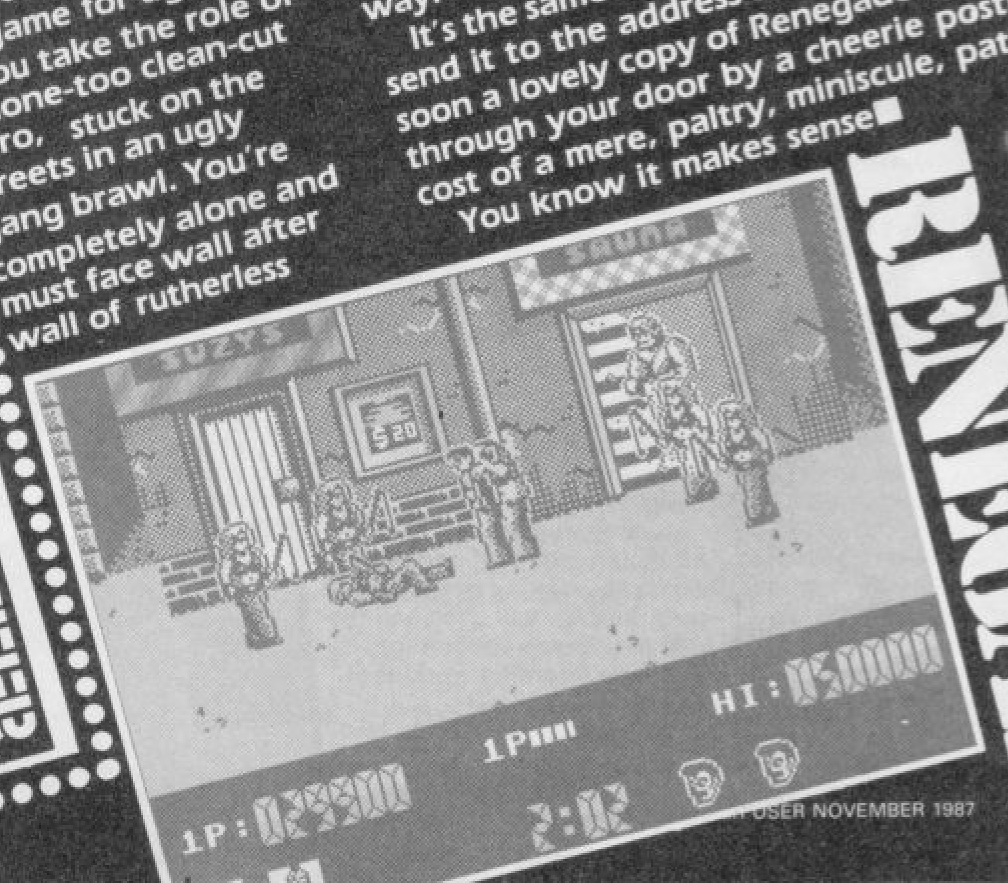
You take the role of a none-too clean-cut hero, stuck on the streets in an ugly gang brawl. You're completely alone and must face wall after wall of rutherless thugs, hell-bent on giving you a good seeing to. Using combination punches, kicks and some decidedly un-gallant tactics, your only objective is to get out alive.

Yup, Renegade is our kind of game. So we took the nearest Inter City 125 up to Manchester and persuaded the guys at the Big 'O' that it was in their interests to put this very tempting offer your way.

It's the same as usual – snip out the coupon, and send it to the address shown here, and pretty soon a lovely copy of Renegade will be squeezed through your door by a cheerie postie, for the cost of a mere, paltry, miniscule, pathetic, £6.45.

You know it makes sense■

£1·50 OFF
SU SMASH OFFER
RENEGADE
Send coupon to: Renegade Smash Offer, Imagine Mail Order, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS, along with a cheque/postal order for £6.45 made payable to Imagine Software

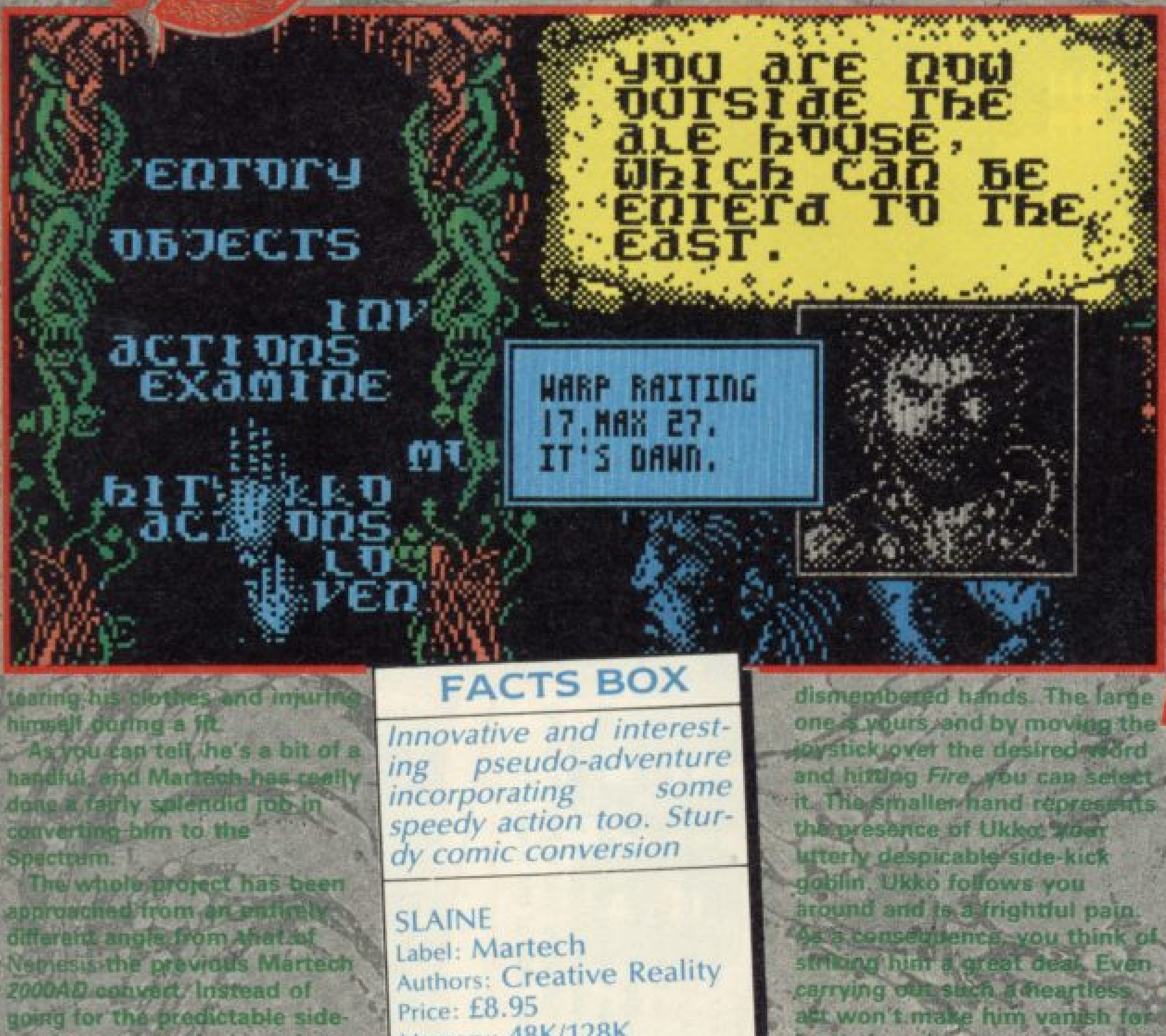


SMASH OFFER RENEGADE

ADVENTURE REVIEW



SLÁINE the King



OK, I admit it. Slaine is my favourite character from *2000AD*. He's a regular kind of guy. None of the obscure historical/biblical analogies found in *Nemesis the Warlock*. None of the fanatical stern-ness of *Judge Dredd*. *Slaine the King* is a down-to-Earth fella. You know where you are with him – usually.

The only flaw in his character is his tendency to lapse into a Warp Spasm at the slightest sign of a fracas. So violent are these spasms, which enable warriors like Slaine to summon up incredible war-like powers, that Slaine must continually wear a harness to prevent him tearing his clothes and injuring himself during a fit.

As you can tell, he's a bit of a handful, and Martech has really done a fairly splendid job in converting him to the Spectrum.

The whole project has been approached from an entirely different angle from that of Nemesis the previous Martech *2000AD* convert. Instead of going for the predictable side-on view and producing what would inevitably be written off as a Barbarian clone, Creative Reality – which was hired to take on the job – invented a system called Reflex.

The Reflex system operates by presenting you (as Slaine) with a list of 'thoughts', of which any one can be selected. The thoughts take up the left-hand side of the screen, which is enclosed by a suitably gothic border. Resting in this part of the screen are two dismembered hands. The large one is yours, and by moving the joystick over the desired word and hitting *Fire*, you can select it. The smaller hand represents the presence of Ukko, your utterly despicable side-kick goblin. Ukko follows you around and is a frightful pain. As a consequence, you think of striking him a great deal. Even carrying out such a heartless act won't make him vanish for long, though.

Anyway, because barbarians have an attention span of about three seconds, not having exceptionally large brains, thoughts drift across the selection area at a quite alarming rate, and picking them out can be quite tricky.

The right-hand half of the screen is left to accommodate a description of your current location and the comic-book style graphics which depict the action.

One of he most important apsects of Slaine is the combat sequence. For one reason or another, you are absolutely *bound* to get yourself into a scuffle of some sort. Here the program takes on a decidedly *D&D* feel, with both sides inflicting an incurring damage points. During the fight sequence, solely war-like thoughts will come into your head, and you have to choreograph your moves without seeing their result.

At the end of the combat, assuming you are the victor, you'll be informed of your injuries and given a full list of initial options – *Move, Action, Look* etc.

Much of the game is spent wandering from location to location, encountering characters and attempting to use your objects to best effect. If you waste one villager, don't expect the others to be particularly helpful.

The biggest niggle I had with Slaine was that you never really feel that you are in a real environment. The descriptions seem a little cramped, and the atmosphere provided by the little black and white pictures that pop up now and again to depict the scenes is limited by their infrequebcy.

Don't let the adventurey-ness of Slaine put you off. It's genuinely engaging game, with completely original controls and high-quality cartoon-style (though static) graphics.

An intriguing game■.



FACTS BOX

Innovative and interesting pseudo-adventure incorporating some speedy action too. Sturdy comic conversion

SLAINE
Label: Martech
Authors: Creative Reality
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ 8

PROGRAMMERS

CREATIVE REALITY is a team of programmers from Portsmouth. It's made up of **Jason Austin, Neil Dodwell, Mike Archer** and **Dave Dew. Dave** handled the graphics, and **Jason** coded the Spectrum version. They've been together for about a year now.
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Nemesis the Warlock** (*Martech*, 1987)

NEBULUS



PROGRAMMERS

JOHNATHAN PHILLIPS did both the highly original game design and the coding for **Nebulus**, his second published game.
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Impossaball** (*Hewson*, 1987)

FACTS BOX

Brilliantly original arcade game. Demands fast reactions and thought and looks great. Rush out and buy it

NEBULUS
Label: Hewson
Author: Jonathan Phillips
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor.

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

SINCLAIR CLASSIC USER

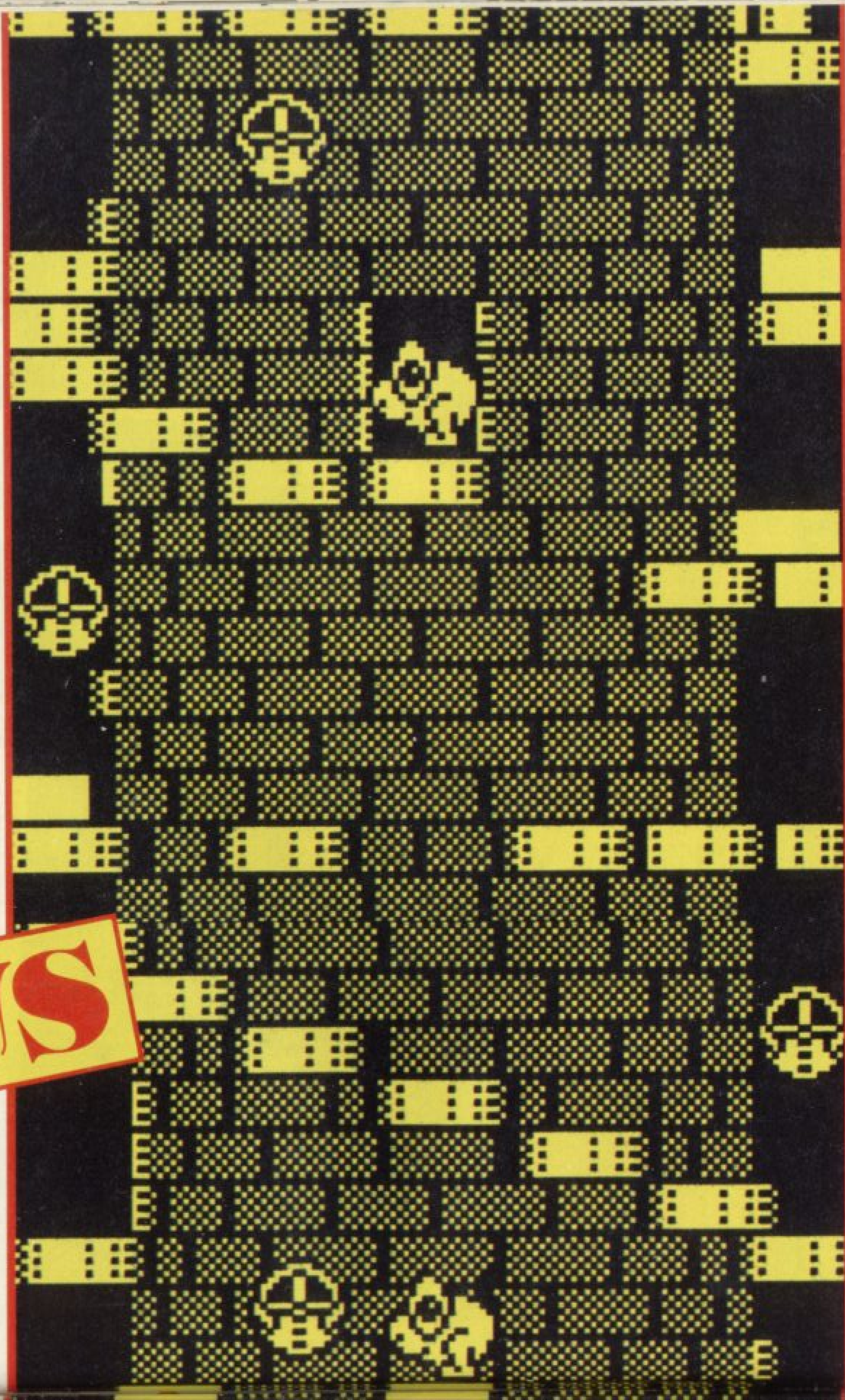
It seems Hewson can do no wrong at the moment. For me anyway.

I have a feeling that **Nebulus** won't be as universally acclaimed as **Zynaps** and **Exolon**, mainly because it's a touch cute. Personally I love it. The game is astonishingly inventive.

The basic element of **Nebulus** is a tower. A seemingly endless tower in the middle of empty space. You control a cute frog-like creature and somehow must ascent to the top of the tower. This is the sum total of the game idea and it works brilliantly because getting up there makes for a classic arcade game.

There are ledges forming steps up the outside of the tower and between them are gaps through which you will tumble time and time again, perhaps down to a lower level from which you'll have to climb up again, perhaps into empty space.

For every gap there is a way past. This sometimes takes more than your standard fast reactions – though you'll need those too, in abundance, to get anywhere. In some places a tunnel takes you through to the other side of the tower, in



others a lift platform raises you to a higher level, you can also jump some gaps – it took me a good while to figure out how so I'm not going to reveal what you do!

In this sense then **Nebulus** is a puzzle but in another it demands some classic joystick jiggling.

There are assorted alien um... things... which zoom around the tower or guard tunnels or bounce up and down or... Anyway, they kill you if you let them touch you. Good job you've got a laser. Problems are a) some of them won't die but will merely be frozen for a while gaining you time but not safety and b) some are surprisingly difficult to hit.

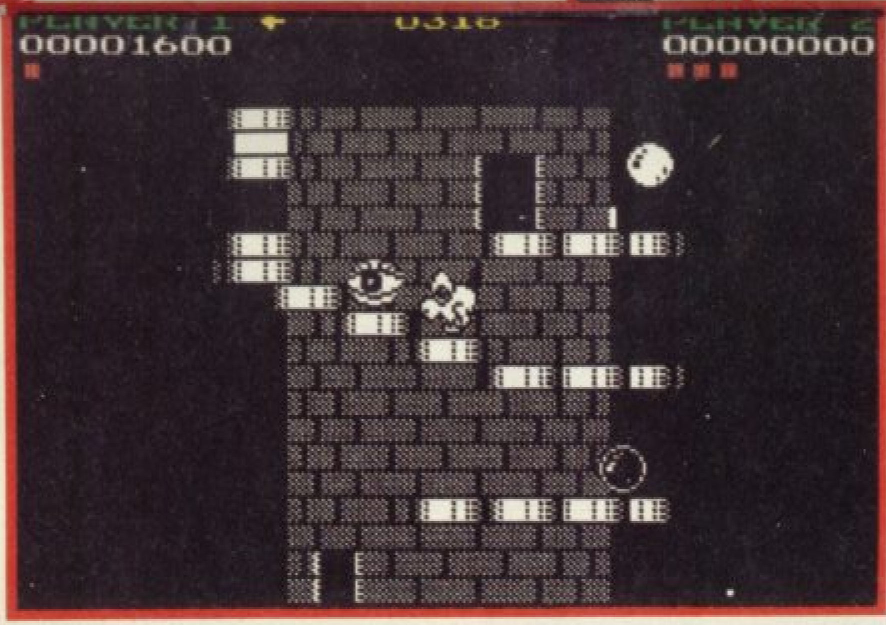
Sometimes the solution is just careful timing. At the bottom of the very first tower is a simple example of this: enter the tunnel entrance too soon and you'll emerge in perfect time to bash straight into a passing alien. On the other hand if you leave it too long the same alien will get you on the other side of the tunnel.

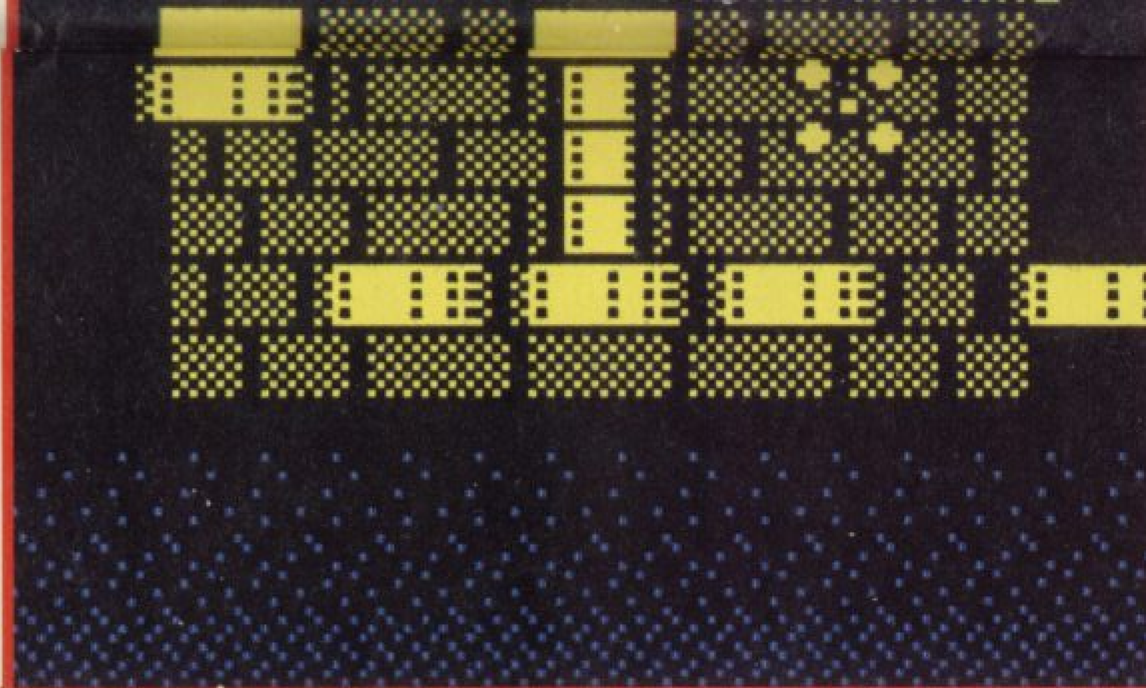
Eventually you find routes up the tower and solve the problems. Seemingly impassable places never are – you just have to *think*. Not too long though, becuase there's a time limit. A very short time limit which gives you very little time to make mistakes.

And if you do get to the top? On to the next tower with another set of puzzles.

It's hard to pin down what makes the game so special. Perhaps it's the tower in space

idea – it looks very solid and the





illusion that it's turning as you step around it is superbly done.

The game is obviously helped by the fact that, this being Hewson, the programming is absolutely A1. No attribute clash, absolutely smooth graphics, above average sound.

In the end, inevitably it's the sheer relentless addictiveness of the game that makes it a winner. The learning curve is just right – just when you've fallen down for the hundredth time and want to give up you get an idea – *maybe if I try*... and you're off again.

If it isn't clear by now, I think **Nebulus** is superb and would make a fantastic coin-op. Buy! Buy! OK?■

BALLBREAKER

Being one of those people who quite liked CRL's last bat and ball game **Room Ten** (lone in a sea of apathy) I guess I'm biased, but in terms of actual forget-about-trendiness-programming technique-or-anything-else fun I think **Ballbreaker** may be one of the most entertaining games for months.

There is a plot, but it is of zero importance – describing **Ball Breaker** is simple: **Breakout** in 3D.

Imagine **Breakout** as played in an Ultimate 3D room layout. Mostly it's straightforward bashing of bricks. There are a few extra treats like maniac lizards that head straight for your bat (fortunately though, you are equipped with the odd missile or two with which to dispatch them.)

The ball (or ovoid as CRL insists on calling it) bounces across the screen, knocking out bricks and generally behaving in authentic **Breakout** fashion – you can even get it trapped behind the wall of bricks and total them dozens at a time. On the 128K version this is accompanied by some very splendid sound effects.

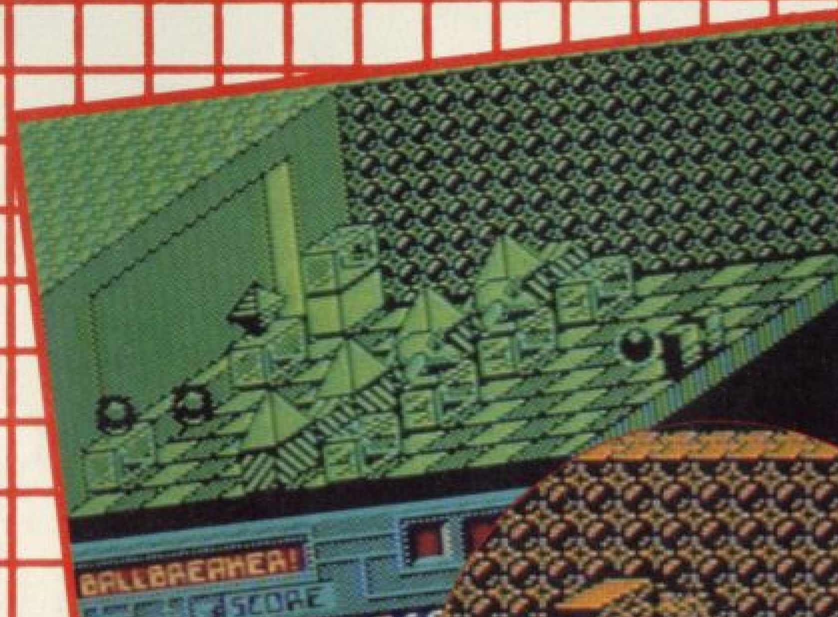
Screen 1 poses no special problems except that in 3D it's particularly easy to miss the ball when it's first dropped into the arena.

By Screen 2 there are a few extra problems to deal with. Sitting on a couple of the bricks are a pair of lizards. When, as you must, you shoot their perch out from under them they get irate and run towards you.

You'd better have a pretty good idea where your missile launch button is, think twice and you're lizard meat. At the same time there's this bouncing ball you're supposed to be hitting at some bricks remember?

The graphics are tolerable – there isn't a lot you can do to make a brick look interesting. Though some of the bricks are bonuses and others are replaced by animated platforms the technique is still the same – watch the ball and get the bat behind it, use the angles carefully to maximise the destruction.

The awesome secret of the success of this game is only that it's fun. There is something in **Brakout** that always made it addictive, way beyond its simplicity would suggest, and with **Ball Breaker** CRL has given it enough of a new twist to ensure another burst of longevity■





FACTS BOX

A new twist on an old idea – Breakout in 3D. Looks so so but is utterly, utterly addictive, Nice one!

BALL BREAKER
Label: CRL
Author: Richard Taylor
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★
★★★★☆ 9

PROGRAMMERS
RICHARD TAYLOR is 18 and has been programming for CRL since he was 13. He has produced a wide variety of programs from utilites to games
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Fifth** (CRL, 1983), **Zaraks** (CRL, 1983), **Terra-**

PIRANHA

YOGI BEAR

Hey Hey Hey!
Are you smarter than the average bear? You'll need to be to get out of this one. Boo-Boo's been bear-napped and must be rescued before hibernation time. Hunters, mooses, vultures, bees, caverns, geysers as well as good old Ranger Smith are determined to stop you!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

THROUGH THE TRAP DOOR

Berk is back!
Now you can actually explore the dark and nasty regions for yourself as you try to rescue your friend Boni, trapped in the murky depths. Along the way all sorts of creepy critters will try to spook you in exciting arcade action!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassette £8.95 Discs £14.95

FLUNKY

The Royal Family as they have never been seen before! This is your chance to work at Buck House — as a menial manservant. Your job is to cater to the residents' every whim, but you'll need cunning, strong nerves and quick reactions if you are going to avoid a nasty end.

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95
Coming soon for the Atari ST.



ATTACK!

Piranha

ROY OF THE ROVERS

Melchester Rovers is under threat of closure from greedy property developers. On the eve of a special celebrity match organised to save the club, Roy's team mysteriously disappears. Unless he rescues them he may end up facing the opposition alone!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95



JUDGE DEATH

Megacity is being terrorised by the Dark Judges — Death himself and his cronies Fear, Fire and Mortis. They are dedicated to putting an end to life itself. As Judge Anderson you stand alone. Only your psychic powers and blazing gun can save Megacity!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

GUNBOAT

Powerful, manoeuvrable and deadly, the Gunboat under your command carries the most lethal waterborn weaponry to date. Deep in the complex maze of fjords and canal systems are your targets — huge submarine pens. Your mission — to seek and destroy!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £8.95 Discs £13.95

For release schedules, please contact Helen Holland at the address below. Piranha games are available from all good stockists or, in case of difficulty, direct from Helen Holland, Piranha, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3FL. Tel: 01-836 6633.

Piranha

TASWORD THE W

Power, flexibility and ease of use. Qualities that have given **TASWORD** a reputation for performance and unbeatable value for money. From a simple letter to a best selling novel, whatever your needs. **TASWORD** can meet your requirements. Simply and efficiently.

TASWORD offers an indispensable range of useful features yet at the same time is remarkably easy to use. With detailed on-screen help displays, comprehensive print options, on-screen formatting and even a built-in mail merge. **TASWORD** is a complete word processor for the ZX Spectrum.



TASWORD TWO
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX 48K Spectrum
cassette £13.90 microdrive cartridge £15.40

The highly successful word processor for the ZX 48K Spectrum. TASWORD TWO does not incorporate mail merge but with 64 characters per line and packed with a host of useful features, TASWORD TWO is the ideal cassette based word processing package for the ZX 48K Spectrum.

TASWORD THREE
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX 48K Spectrum
microdrive cartridge £16.50

TASWORD THREE set a new standard for word processing on the ZX Spectrum. Featuring enhanced program and cursor speed, up to 128 characters per line, advanced text editing commands and a powerful mail merge facility, TASWORD THREE is the definitive word processor for the ZX 48K Spectrum and ZX 48K Spectrum + with microdrive.

TASWORD 128
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX Spectrum 128
cassette £13.90

TASWORD 128 has been specifically developed to take full advantage of the memory offered by the Spectrum 128. A massive 60,000 characters can be held in memory at any one time, enough room for over 10,000 words! Incorporating a range of powerful commands and a mail merge facility (when transferred to microdrive). TASWORD 128 takes full advantage of the ZX Spectrum 128. TASWORD 128 is supplied on, and will run on, cassette and can easily be transferred to microdrive following instructions supplied with the program.

TASWORD PLUS TWO
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX Spectrum + 2
cassette £13.90

Designed to cater for the ZX Spectrum + 2 keyboard layout and legends, TASWORD PLUS TWO is packed with useful features — 64K text files, help displays, on-screen formatting and a sophisticated set of print options. TASWORD PLUS TWO is readily transferred to microdrive although mail merge can even be done from cassette.

TASWORD PLUS THREE
THE WORD PROCESSOR

for the ZX Spectrum + 3
disc £19.95

A sophisticated version of TASWORD designed to take full advantage of the super fast ZX Spectrum + 3 disc drives. Supplied on 3 inch disc, TASWORD PLUS THREE features an indispensable range of powerful editing commands which are complemented by on-screen help displays, disc management commands and comprehensive printing options. Power and ease of use combined into one program.

TASWIDE
THE SCREEN STRETCHER

TASWIDE for the ZX 48K Spectrum
cassette £5.50

With this machine code utility you can write your own Basic programs that will, with normal PRINT statements, print onto the screen in the compact lettering used by TASWORD TWO. With TASWIDE you can double the information shown on the screen!

TASPRINT
THE STYLE WRITER

TASPRINT for the ZX 48K Spectrum
cassette £9.90 microdrive cartridge £11.40

A must for dot matrix printer owners! Print your program output and listings in a choice of five impressive print styles. TASPRINT utilises the graphics capabilities of dot matrix printers to form, with a double pass of the printhead, output in a range of five fonts varying from the futuristic Data-Run to the hand writing simulation of Palace Script. A TASPRINT gives your output originality and style! The TASPRINT fonts are shown below together with a list of compatible printers.

COMPACTA -
bold and heavy, good for emphasis

DATA-RUN -
A FUTURISTIC SCRIPT

LECTURA LIGHT -
clean and pleasing to read

MEDIAN -
a serious business-like script

PALACE SCRIPT -
a distinctive flowing font

TASCOPY
THE SCREEN COPIER

for the ZX Spectrum with ZX Interface 1
cassette £9.90 microdrive cartridge £11.40

Screen copy software for use with the RS232 output of ZX Interface 1 only. TASCOPY produces monochrome (in a choice of two sizes) and large screen copies in which the screen colours are printed as different shades. With TASCOPY you can keep a permanent and impressive record of your screen pictures and diagrams.



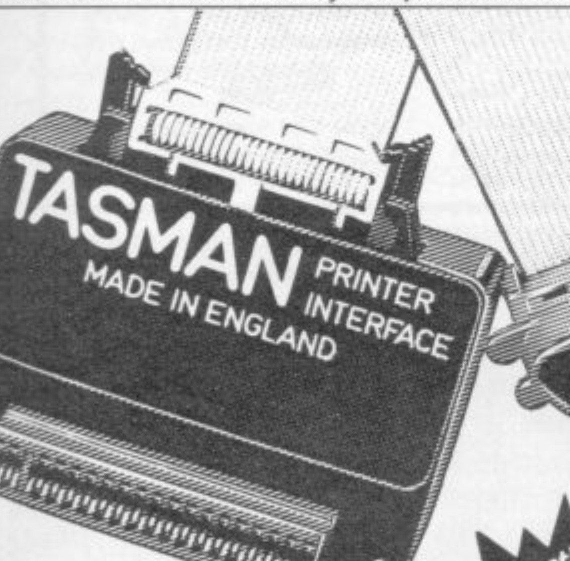
TASPRINT and TASCOPY drive all Epson compatible dot matrix printers, e.g.:

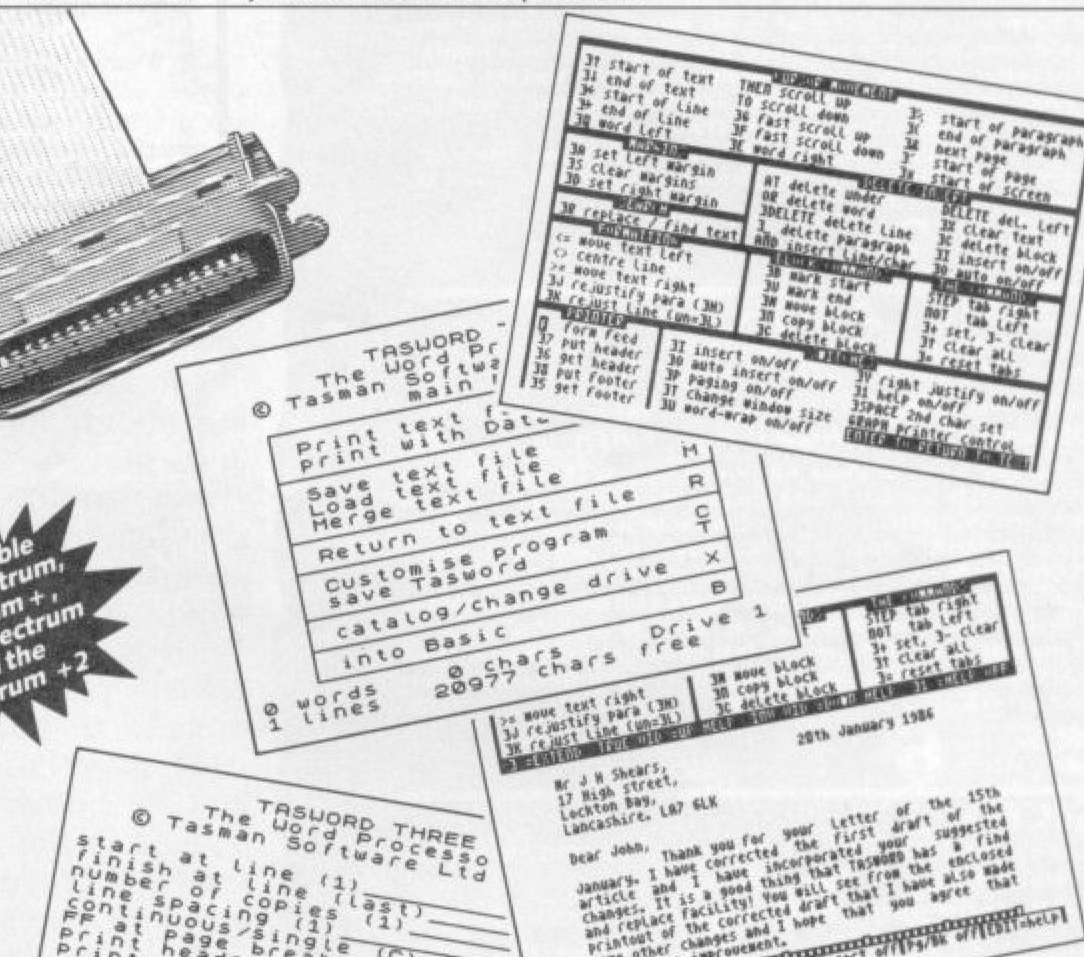
AMSTRAD DMP 2000	*NEC PC 8023 B-N*	*BROTHER M1009*
AMSTRAD DMP 3000	*MANNESMANN TALLY MT80*	*BROTHER M1109*
EPSON FX-80	*STAR DMP 510/515*	*BROTHER HR5*
EPSON RX-80	*STAR NL-10*	*SHINWA CP80*
EPSON MX-80 MK III	*COSMOS 80*	*EPSON LX-80*

WORD PROCESSOR

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TWILIGHT

HOLIDAY IN SUMARIA

ARCADE Label: **Pirate Software** Author: **In-house** Price: **£2.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Gary Rook**

Cheap and nasty take-off of Ultimate and Gargoyle games like *Alien* ***and*** *Sweevos World*

Arghh I've seen some poor games in my time mate but this just about takes the biscuit.

The idea and most of the graphics are just poor quality versions of chunks out of far, far better games. You guide Sid through the maze of rooms (all from the familiar top right-hand corner three dimensional view point) he jumps on to things that look suspiciously like giant crisps, pouffs (the things you sit on) and mushrooms. Pick things up, drop them, push things around, avoid the monsters. Yes, we've been here before and it looked better last year. The programmer has even had the gall to introduce a monster that looks incredibly like the Sabreman's wolf incarnation from Knightlore **but jerky and crudely drawn!**

The graphics are disappointing, too – because you know what they should look like – and the response is basically yawn making. Even at £3.00 this one isn't worth it■

★★☆☆☆ ★☆☆☆☆ **3**

ATV SIMULATOR

ARCADE Label: **Codemasters** Author: **Tim Miller** Price: **£1.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Gary Rook**

Cheap and friendly little simulator that lets you drive one of those ATV dune bike things. Not brill, but OK

Not easy, riding one of these All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) bikes with big overfilled tires – but I think I'm just about getting the hang of iiiiitttttt (crash! tinkle!!). ATV is a decent little budget title. The graphics are utility model – they work, but they're not particularly pretty – and the gameplay likewise. Fans of BMX Simulators **may find this too easy but I quite enjoyed myself. The controls are a bit difficult too get the hang of at first, but perseverance pays off. You'll take a lot of spills before you manage to get through the first couple of courses, but you should enjoy yourself while doing so. The title music by David Whittaker ain't too bad either■**

★★★☆☆ ★★★☆☆ **6**

BOUNCES

ARCADE Label: **Firebird** Price: **£1.99** Author: **Beyond/Monolith** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Reissued Beyond oldie. Future sports, nicely animated but from a poor idea. Definitely in the wrong court

Firebird seems to be getting something of a reputation for pushing our reissued full-price stuff on budget. This time it's an old Beyond title, Bounces, **that gets the treatment.**

In the future, *the* game to play is Bounces and *the* place to play it is the Leisure Dome. Leisure plays a large part in the lifestyles of the citizens of future Earth and as everyone is an employee of the Eco-Zone Corp, they spend most of there time in the domes playing Bounces.

It's like a slightly advanced game of catch. Two players stand facing each other at opposite ends of the arena. They then proceed to throw a ball at each other. Note: *at*, not *to*. One person throws the ball, and the other tries to catch it by moving forward or backward, or by jumping up and down. When you throw the ball you can control the on-screen player by pressing *Fire* to move his arms. Just to complicate matters, both players are tied to walls on pieces of elastic, and should your stamina drop, you are pulled back to earth with a bump.

Bounces wasn't exactly met with terrific enthusiasm when it was first released and neither is it now. Good for a rainy afternoon ■

★★★☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ **5**

UCHI MATA

SIMULATION Label: **Alternative** Author: **Software Communications** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Graham Taylor**

Bargain reissue of old Martech combat game. Stands the best of time very well

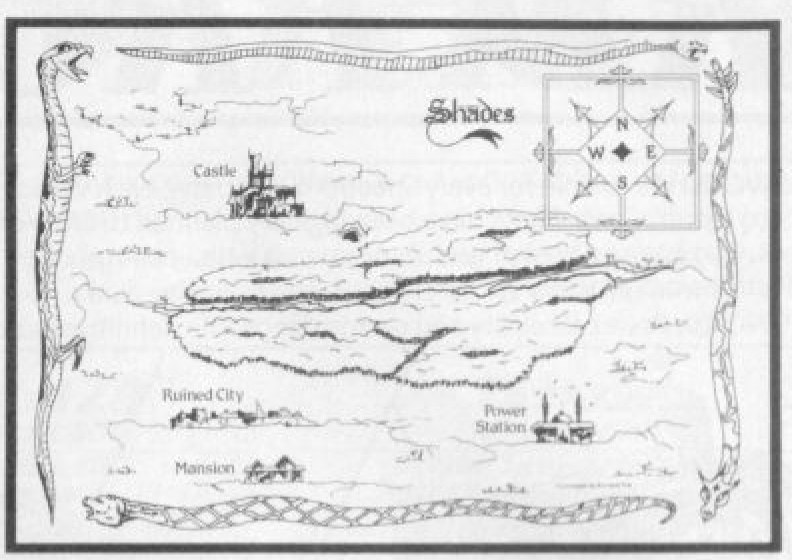
As budget reissues go, this is quite a bargain I reckon. It's a pretty good simulation of judo and lets you chuck your opponents around in a very authentic manner.

The graphics are large and the animation works well. A weird technique to create the main sprites seems to involve making them look as though seen through slats. Odd lines run up and down their Kimonos.

Brian Jacks had a hand in the development of this one and it really does make for a slightly different challenge from the usual run-of-the-mill combat things■

★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **8**

ZONE



IN THE SHADE

Shades is special. There have been play-by-modem games before but something about Shades creates a special obsession in its players. Shades is like an adventure game – but an adventure game being played by simultaneously by 120 players. Launched last year, the game has grown to double its size and now has 4,000 regular players running 6,500 different characters. Men pretend to be women, women pretend to be men, sometimes women pretend to be women, Shades is like that. For most players, the objective is to accumulate 200,000 points and become the most powerful players in the game – Wizards and Witches. Of the 4,000 players only 20 have so far reached this exaulted status. Beyond that – who knows?

In this special feature a Shades addict speaks out and explains how going down the pub is ruining his phone bills. . .

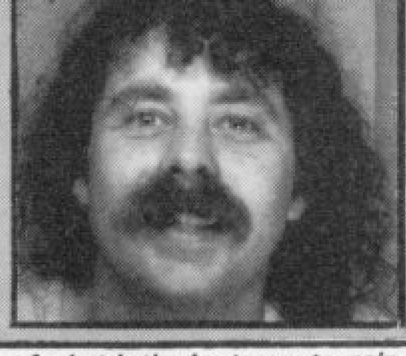


SPECIAL OFFER

SU MEGA MIX TAPE

So awesomely fantastic was the response to the Quicksilva SU Mega-mix tape offer we thought we'd give all those people who missed out last time a chance once again to become the funkiest person on your street.

MARK PAINTER



Shades personae: *plays as characters from Michael Moorcock's 'Elrich' books*
Phone bill: *last quarter – £155*
Average play: *8-10 hours a week*
Job: *Sells and delivers furniture*
Hobbies: *Drinking cider*

First of all let's get one thing straight, Shades is not just a game – it's a way of life!

I mean where else would you have a player marrying another and then being first attacked by a rat and then crippled by a spell?

Shades takes place in a very strange land where not everything is what it might seem to be, and no two days are the same. Not only are there computer controlled people wondering around, but all the other 120 players are there as well. And their actions can be very important to you.

When you are struck in a pit with no means of escape, unless you can talk someone into magically summoning you out of it, you are in mega-trouble, so be nice and polite to the more experienced players. Remember, you can get your own back on the unpleasant ones when you've gone up a few levels.

As with normal adventures, it's very important to make a map. More confusing is that Shades keeps changing all the time. Once you've got your map, you will soon start to know where the treasure is to be found and you will be running as fast as you can type to beat the other players to it.

Every fourty-five minutes the whole game is Reset and restored to its starting position and all the mobiles the computer generated characters are brought back to life. After each reset everyone tries to grab all the treasure that they can find since treasure makes points. And points is what you're after.

Gain points and you'll gain equal power. From the lowly novice with none at all, right up to the all-powerful Wizards with their hundreds of thousands – with each point level reached, your status is improved, with more strength to carry, more power to fight, and more magic to use.

Shades is not just a boring set of puzzles to be worked out – unlike an ordinary computer adventure. It's all about how you interact with the other players. Each time you play you encounter different players – real people, not computer generated – with different ideas of what is the best way to gain those all important point. Some players spend all their time seeking treasure and placing it in the special room designed for the purpose, whilst others find that killing the computer mobiles gives them enough points.

However Shades being what it is, a lot more players take pleasure earning points from killing other players. Each time you kill a player they loose half their points and you gain one sixteenth. It is not that easy. They aren't going to just hang around doing nothing while you hack at them, and they will do all they can to kill you at the same time. So, when in doubt, run away and save those hard earned points!

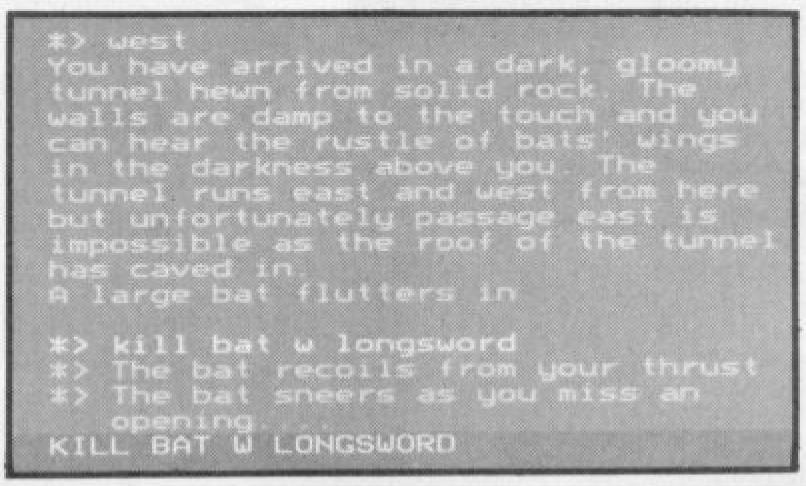


Shades can be so frustrating at times! Just when you've found yourself a decent weapon and are lying in wait for a victim to arrive, you can find yourself magically summoned by someone else, and forced to make a quick exit before you are wiped out. At other times you might arrive at the scene of a fight and find a whole load of treasure just waiting to be picked up.

That's what makes Shades so Great. Every time you play it's different!

There's even a pub, and you can go in, quaff a few ales and talk to any of the other players there. There's a church – and last week there was a 'wedding' there between two players and they had the church redecorated specially for the event – the game organisers change the location descriptions all the time to up-date the game.

You really do feel the game world's real. It's a bit like being part of an adventure-game soap. Quite recently the game had been running for one year and there was a Shades first birthday party – everyone who played the game that day found the location descriptions changed with a free drink – a punch bowl – in every room!■



Just to remind you, the SU Mega-mix* is a funkified, permutated twiddled, fiddled, mixed-up mix-down of some of the most brilliant Spectrum game soundtracks around.

We've added drum-machines, samplers, synthesisers, digital reverbs, guitar solos and quite probably the entire London Philharmonic to produce a music soundtrack so wonderful you may want to hang up your joystick and get on your dancing shoes.

It's supplied on a single C15 tape, and since the second side is blank you can also use it to store your own programs. Not only that but it is astoundingly cheap – a mere 99p.

The featured music is written by one of the top games track talents around – Dave Whittaker – mixed down by ace-muso Chris Jenkins and includes the soundtracks to Quicksilva **The Tube** and **Glider Rider,** both of which were featured in the last issue's SU Spectrum Top Five soundtrack chart.

If you're even slightly into great Spectrum music this is your chance to blow those Commodore owners A-wayyy.

*Note this is an audio tape – you do not even have to have a Spectrum to get funkified!!!■

ALL ABOUT THE MEGA-MIX

The Quicksilva *Tube/Glider Rider* mega-mix was created with many with many hours of toil in the studio of Fluffy Banana Music.

The original music was transferred directly from the Spectrum 128K to one track of a Tascam 38 eight-track recorder, with a little digital reverb and delay added for depth. Parts of the computer music, including the end themes of both games, were also sampled for later use.

The overdubs were then played by hand (since it wasn't possible to synchronise a sequencer with the original music!) using a Yamaha DX100 FM synth, Korg DW 8000 analogue/digital synth, Akai S900 sampler, Sequential Circuits Drumstraks digital drum machine and ART 1500 and Alesis Midiverb effects units.

The sampled sounds, manipulated with the S900, include trumpets, heavy-metal guitars and snare drums from chart records, and Spitfires from WW2 – the explosion at the end is a mixture of a bomb, a clap of thunder and a crashing aircraft!

The whole shebang was mixed down in genuine stereo on an RAM 10-8-2 mixer, and is presented for your delight by Fluffy Banana Music – the coolest and cuddliest music outfit in the entire galaxy■

How to order your tape

Send a cheque or postal order made payable to EMAP B+CP for 99p to Sinclair User Music Mega-mix, 14 Holkham Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Please allow 28 days for delivery. Offer closes September 30.

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MASTERFILE *Plus* 3

MASTERFILE PLUS 3 for the new ZX SPECTRUM +3
By Campbell Systems

Many thousands have used Spectrum MASTERFILE, in its day the most elegant filing system around. Over recent years improved designs for the CPC and PCW versions have evolved, and now MASTERFILE PLUS 3 has been created by refining still further the PCW version. In fact the PLUS 3 edition is four generations of re-design ahead of the original MASTERFILE, and gives immense power, speed, and flexibility compared with the original. Yet it is easier to use, one rarely needs to refer to the 62-page manual. To the original Spectrum has been added a disc drive, 64K RAM, printer port. But just see what has been added to the original MASTERFILE, from this huge list of features; things like MERGE, FIELD CALCULATION, IMPORT, EXPORT, KEYED FILES, FIELD EDIT, TABLE LOOK-UP, DATE-STAMP, VISUAL 96-COLUMN SCREEN/FORMS DESIGN. In fact, FOUR times as much code as the original MASTERFILE!

Menu-driven; 100% machine-coded; Fields may be character, numeric, or date; 1-60 fields per record; All fields records and files are variable-length; 0-254 characters per field; File processing is via RAM disc; 2K max per record; 62K max per file; 9 User-defined screen/print formats; Panel and box display embellishments; Column totals; Word-wrapped text; Special feature for surname sequencing; Left/Right/Centre justification; Record numbering; Page numbering of printed output; Alter formats, data names, attributes, at any time; 96-column virtual screen; 1-20 records on screen at a time; Files may be keyed or un-keyed; Keyed files are always kept in sequence, even when keys are altered; Keyed files can be merged by key; Formats can be transferred across files; Un-keyed files can be merged by append; Data can be exported in ASCII to TASWORD etc; ASCII data can be import/merged; File data can be saved selectively; Table look-up for expanding codes into text; Grouping by look-up code; Exhaustive printing options; Serial/Centronics printing; Print-to-disk option for transfer to TASWORD etc; Disc directory file selection; Ultra-fast search, any criteria, including string scan; Assign file sub-set to any of 8 'set' states; Browse options including GOTO and FIND; Sort by any field for display/print, whether keyed or not; Erase/insert/edit any displayed field under cursor control; Insert record at any place if un-keyed file; Text editor includes column count, CAPS and Insert status; Date-stamping of printed output; Date-stamp of saved files; Block-erase selected records; File statistics maintained on screen; Field calculation via formulae; Utility to convert original Spectrum MASTERFILE file data.



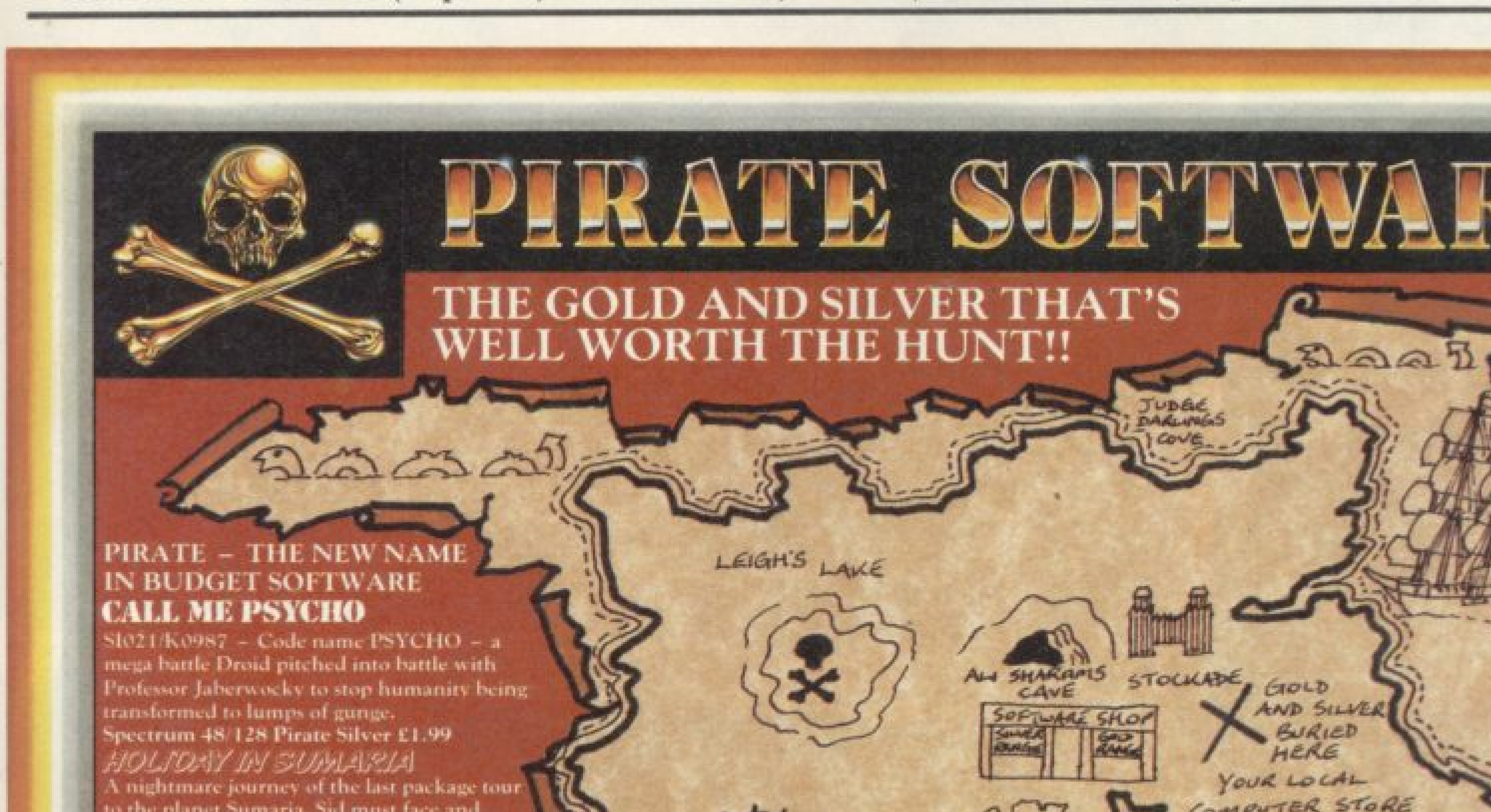
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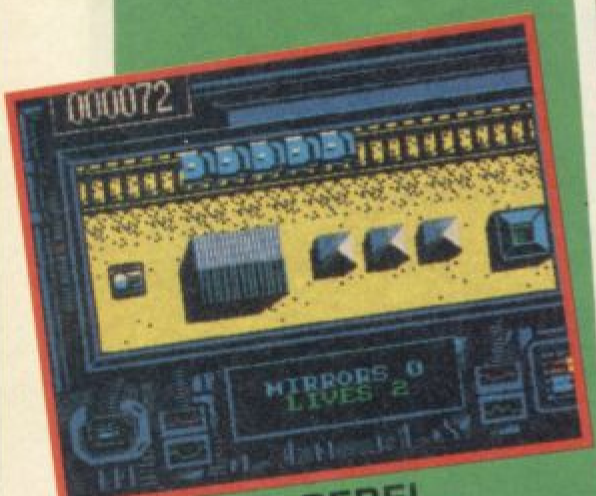


HOT
FULL PRICE

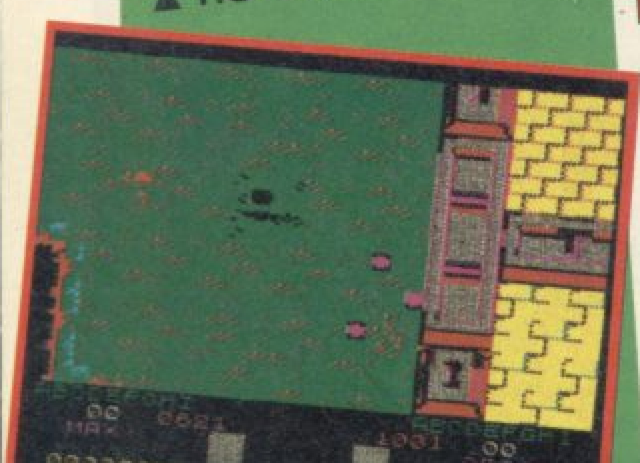
Athena from Imagine is hovering just outside the 20 and it's running-jumping-dodging in fine style with a neat blast-the-boulders option (see the map, this SU). Rebel is a really clever strategy game idea from Virgin, which deserves to do well, and Centurions – which seems to be selling well ahead of reviews – is absolutely appalling (believe us, believe us!)



▲ HOT: ATHENA



▲ HOT: REBEL

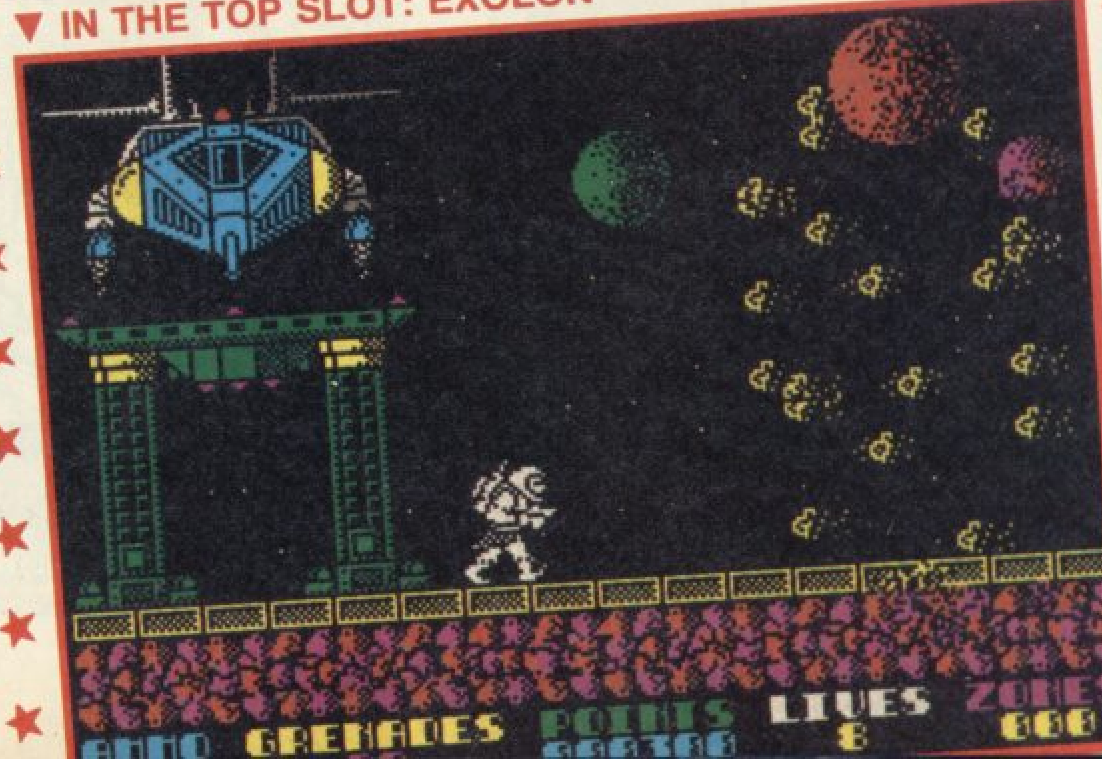


▲ HOT: CENTURIONS

FULL PRICE 20

Pos	Last	Title	Comment	Classic	Publisher	Price	Rating
1	(2)	EXOLON	Superb. The best blast game for ages – buy it now!		HEWSON	£7.95	10 STARS
2	(1)	ROAD RUNNER	Straightforward coin-op chase game	CLASSIC	US GOLD	£9.95	7 STARS
3	(3)	LEADERBOARD TOURNAMENT	If you loved Leaderboard, you'll love this too		US GOLD	£4.99	9 STARS
4	NEW!	WIZBALL	Frenetic stick waggling of the highest quality.	CLASSIC	OCEAN	£7.95	10 STARS
5	(1)	BARBARIAN	Top quality combat program. An essential purchase		PALACE	£9.95	10 STARS
6	(4)	GAME OVER	Flip-screen game that fails to captivate. Average stuff		IMAGINE	£7.95	5 STARS
7	(9)	LIVING DAYLIGHTS	Better than View to a Kill... Compendium of eight goodish short games		DOMARK	£9.95	7 STARS
8	(8)	ENDURO RACER	Puts the others to shame. A new standard for arcade conversions		ACTIVISION	£7.95	10 STARS
9	(13)	PAPERBOY	Excellent conversion from the coin-op hit. Great		ELITE	£7.95	10 STARS
10	(11)	ARMY MOVES	Highly violent and very morally unsound!		IMAGINE	£7.95	10 STARS
11	NEW!	DEATH WISH III	From the Bronson film. Not enough gameplay variety		GREMLIN	£7.99	7 STARS
12	(7)	GAUNTLET	Classic coin-op converted as well as you could wish		US GOLD	£8.99	10 STARS
13	(6)	LEADERBOARD	Deserves to take the simulation market by storm	CLASSIC	US GOLD	£9.95	10 STARS
14	(19)	F-15 STRIKE EAGLE	Emphasis on simulation accuracy, not graphics or gameplay		MICROPROSE	£9.95	5 STARS
15	(14)	KONAMI'S COIN-OP HITS	Good value compilation with Tie Ar Kung Fu and Green Beret		IMAGINE	£9.95	9 STARS
16	(10)	HIT 6-PAK	Top value mix of oldies and one newie – varies from good to bad		ELITE	£9.95	9 STARS
17	(12)	ZYNAPS	The game that joysticks were designed for	CLASSIC	HEWSON	£7.95	10 STARS
18	(16)	VULCAN	Has to be a classic for any wargamer	CLASSIC	CCS	£9.95	10 STARS
19	NEW!	COIN-OP CLASSICS	Re-release of three solid conversions. Nothing new to tempt		US GOLD	£9.95	6 STARS
20	NEW!	STIFFLIP & CO	Visually impressive and entertaining adventure		PALACE	£9.99	8 STARS

▼ IN THE TOP SLOT: EXOLON



SU CHARTS

COMPILED BY GALLUP FOR SINCLAIR USER

ARCADE

1	RUN FOR GOLD	ALTERNATIVE
2	EXOLON	HEWSON
3	BACK TO THE FUTURE	FIREBIRD
4	ROAD RUNNER	US GOLD
5	MILK RACE	MASTERTRONIC

ADVENTURE

1	STIFFLIP & CO	PALACE
2	AGENT X	MASTERTRONIC
3	SHADOWS OF MORDOR	MELBOURNE HOUSE
4	CUSTERD'S QUEST	POWER HOUSE
5	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD

SIMULATION

1	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
2	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
3	OLYMPIC SPECTACULAR	ALTERNATIVE
4	LEADERBOARD TOURNAMENT	US GOLD
5	EDDIE KIDD'S JUMP CHALLENGE	RICOCHET

BUDGET 10

1	(2)	**RUN FOR GOLD** 3D running game – looks good but gets tedious	ALTERNATIVE £1.99	6 STARS
2	NEW!	**BACK TO THE FUTURE** Budget release of Activision 'big licence' drivel. Five or six minutes fun	FIREBIRD £1.99	4 STARS
3	NEW!	**ATV SIMULATOR** Second of the trio of Codemasters simulators	CODE MASTERS £1.99	6 STARS
4	(1)	**BMX SIMULATOR** A bikers' paradise with smooth slippery action	CODE MASTERS £1.99	10 STARS
5	(3)	**MILK RACE** Nice tie-in to the cycle race. Entertaining, with a touch of suspense	MASTERTRONIC £2.99	8 STAR
6	NEW!	**OLYMPIC SPECTACULAR** Ageing and tedious multi-sports simulator. Tosh	ALTERNATIVE £1.95	3 STARS
7	NEW!	**DESTRUCTO** Budget blasting with novel loop-the-loop flying	BULLDOG £1.99	7 STARS
8	(4)	**DEAD OR ALIVE** Commando varient set in the Wild West. Entertaining enough	ALTERNATIVE £1.99	7 STARS
9	NEW!	**SUPER ROBIN HOOD** So boring I had to strap myself to my keyboard just to keep playing	CODE MASTERS £1.99	4 STARS
10	(7)	**FEUD** Highly entertaining arcade adventure – great graphics and 12 spells	BULLDOG £2.99	9 STARS

HOT BUDGET

Highest new entry is Joe Blade from Players, a neat left-right walkabout with decent graphics. And catching up fast is Motos, Mastertronic's excellent conversion from the coin-op of the same name



▲ HOT: MOTOS

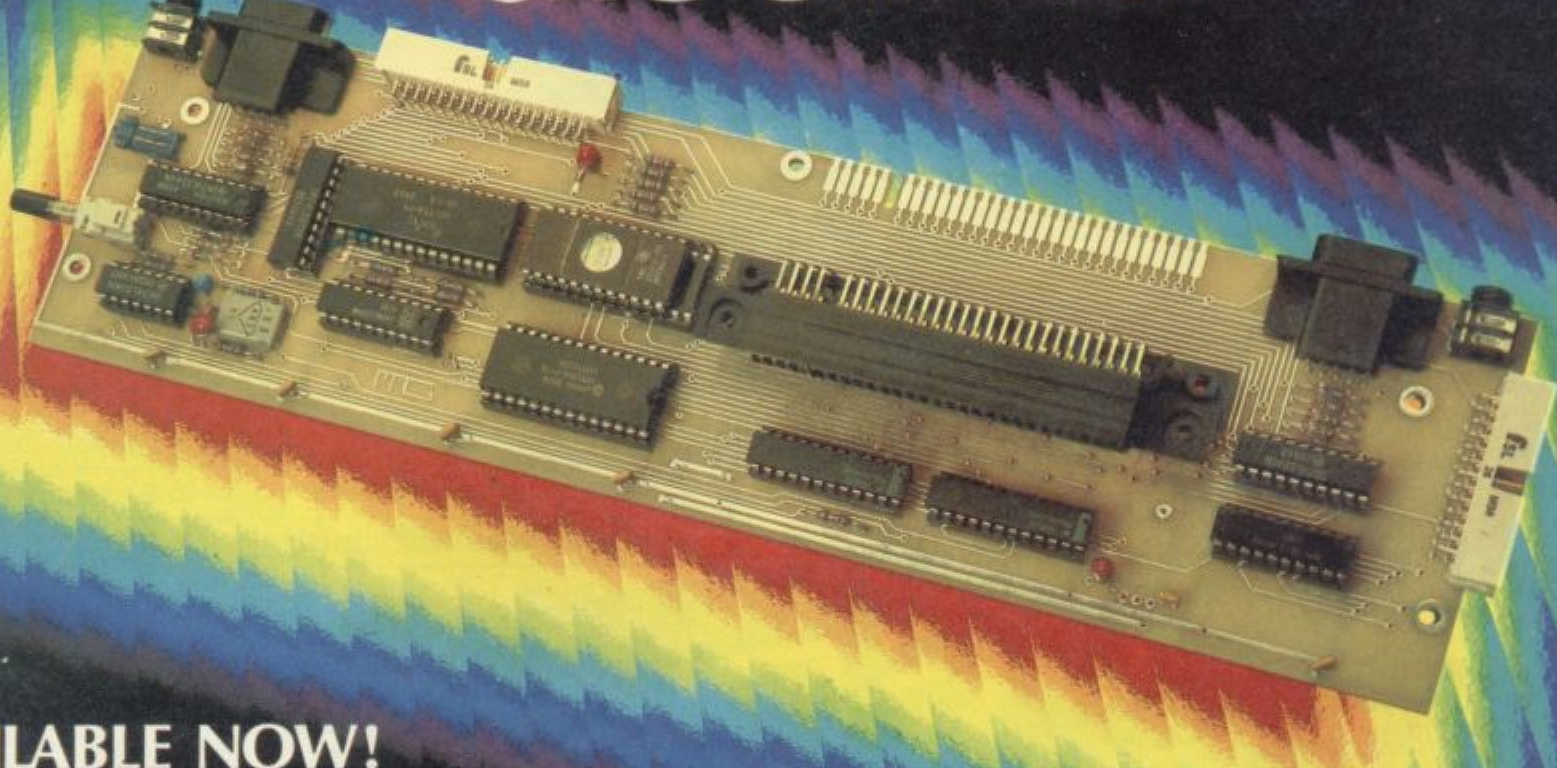


▲ HOT: JOE BLADE

▼ IN THE TOP SLOT: RUN FOR GOLD



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ARCADE REVIEW



SUPERSPRINT

In the wake of Codemasters' budget offering **Grand Prix Simulator,** Electric Dreams will have an extremely tough time justifying the comparatively enormous £9.99 ticket attached to **Supersprint.**

The two games are both plan-view racing games, and they do look very similar.

If you want to take value for money as your sole guideline, **Supersprint** wouldn't even make it on to the starting grid. But it is a better game.

I'm still not quite sure which one I'd go for. Take a look at some of **Supersprint**'s pros and cons and decide for yourself.

Supersprint – unlike **Grand Prix,** although you wouldn't guess it – has been licensed from the Atari coin-op of the same name, so there's a definite attraction for arcade freaks.

In case you haven't seen it in your local cabinet emporium, I'll expound a bit on the general idea. **Supersprint** involves eight race-tracks and four race cars. You either take on three computer-generated machines or try your luck against two 'drone' cars and one contrelled by a friend. The aim of the game is perfectly simple – you've got to make it around the track four times before anyone else.

The tracks are viewed from above, and when you kick-off, you'll get a diagram of each, allowing you to select any starting layout by hitting whichever key you have defined as the accelerator (*Fire* on the joystick).

And then you're off! The screen throws up a picture of the track, and numerous items proceed to appear. First up are the four cars (each a different colour), then the chequered section, the flag and other bits around the circuit. A white flag flutters in the breeze, and the race is on.

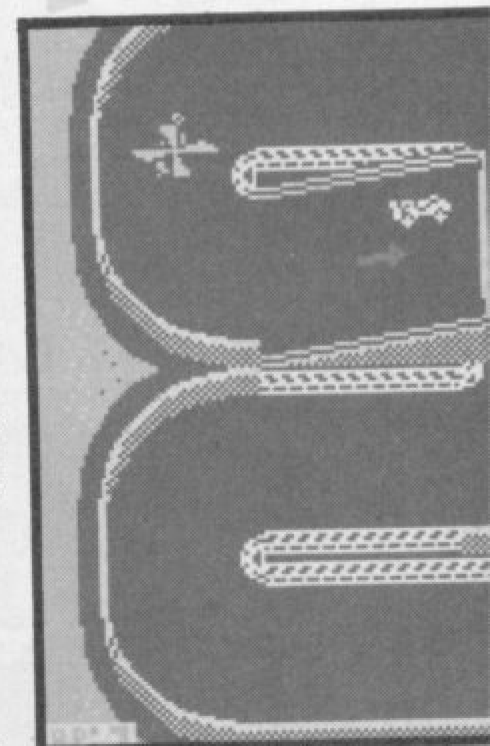
Using your left and right controls and accelerator – no brakes, oddly enough – you glide around the track, passing through other cars (!) and going under bridges and over ramps etc. Yes, I was a little surprised to discover that you don't come a cropper on collision with anyone else in the race. When you think about it, though, the track is quite narrow and were you to attempt to avoid touching any of the other cars, the entire game would deteriorate into a frightfully tiresome plodding affair.

Graphically, it's true, **Supersprint** is no great shakes. The track layouts are just green squares with black roads carved into them, and the cars are fairly tiny.

As you scoot around, trying to take the corners faster and faster, bonus objects will pop up. One gives you a few more points. The other, a golden spanner, will entitle you to make improvements to your car, giving it better grip on the

PROGRAMMERS

CATALYST converted **Supersprint** from coin-op to computer for Electric Dreams.
TONY MACK was responsible for the Spectrum version. In the past he worked on **Paperboy** for Elite. The firm currently working on big-name titles like **Rampage** for Electric Dreams, **Victory Road** for Ocean and **Flying Shark** for Firebird.
SOFTOGRAPHY **Paperboy** (*Elite, 1986*) **Tarzan** (*Martech* 1986) **Nemesis The Warlock** (*Martech, 1987*)



CENTURIONS

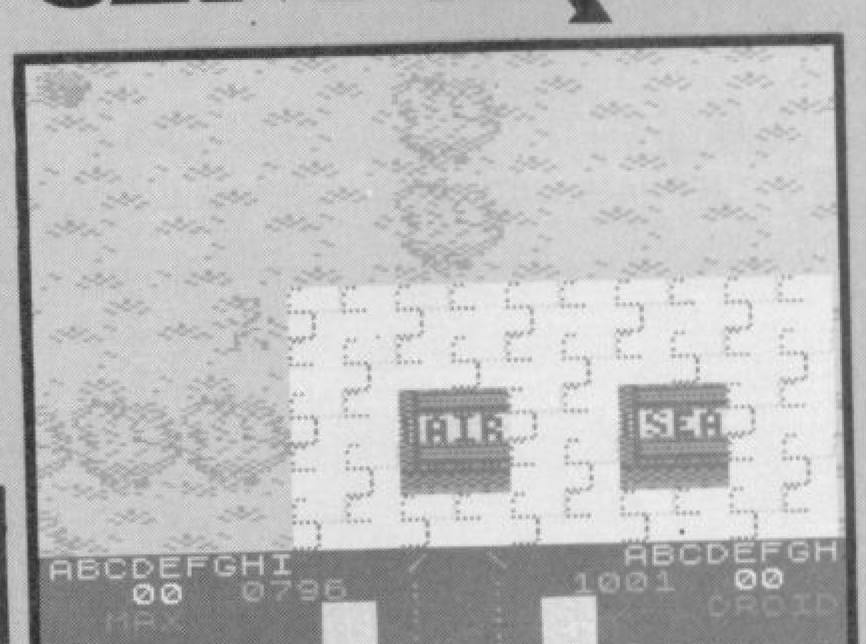
If the idea of jigging around in a thoroughly preposterous exoskeleton, being called Jake and chasing after someone by the name of Doc Terror while still managing to look like a match-stick man refugee from an L. S. Lowry painting appeals to you, then I dare say **Centurions** will too.

Otherwise you'll find it odd that such a big toy game licence has been turned into such a mega-poor game – as you will see.

At first sight **Centurions** is a bit **Guantlet**y, only not as neat looking. Graphically the game consists of a plan view of three different sections, outdoor and interior. The characters you control are represented by a single stick man. The only visual difference between the characters is colour.

As for shooting! A large atribute problem kind of judders across the screen!!

The only thing that could possibly redeem **Centurions** would be a addictive core of a game underneath the frightful exterior. So it's a bit of a blow to discover that the game itself is only moderately more interesting than a wallpaper catalogue.



FACTS BOX

Poor programming and game design manage to push a good idea well into the realms of complete dross. Steer clear

CENTURIONS
Label: Reaktor
Authors: Tony Crowther, Ross Goodley
Price: £8.95
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

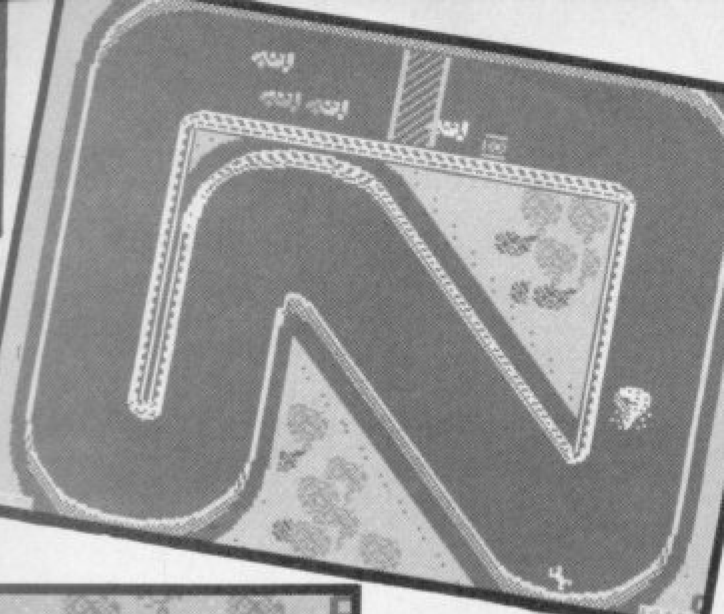
Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **3**

PROGRAMMERS

TONY CROWTHER and **ROSS GOODLEY** designed **Centurions** having worked on **Gobots** previously.
The Spectrum conversion was produced by an understandably secretive person by the name of **A. N. Other....**







FACTS BOX

Over-priced and not visually stunning, though entertaining, fast and addictive. Buy if you're feeling rich

SUPERSPRINT
Label: Electric Dreams
Authors:
Price: £9.99
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: [signature]

★★★★☆ ★★★☆☆ 7

The gameplay is also a bit like **Guantlet** derivative. You wander around the play area, fending off goons and collecting keys to the next level.

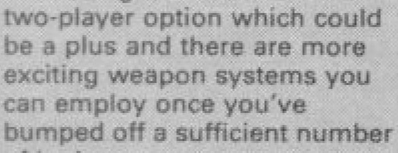
The screen scrolls in four directions, and you can race around with reasonable speed, though you seem to spend a large amount of time racing through highly uninteresting wastelands and corridors. You can change into any **Centurion** you like by returning to a kind of groundbase and passing over the appropriate icon. Quite what good this does is a little unclear.

Try as I might, I couldn't get any character to do anything obviously impossible for the other two. Still, I'm sure this was owing to my own deficiency.

The only things I could find interesting are that there's a two-player option which could be a plus and there are more exciting weapon systems you can employ once you've bumped off a sufficient number of bad guys.

Unfortunately, there is simply no disguising the fact that **Centurions** has lamentably poor gameplay, is graphically awful and isn't very well programmed at all.

What a waste of a potentially interesting game subject■



road, or faster acceleration.

You'll have to be careful when you make a dive for one of the bonus items that you don't drive into the white tornado which howls across the track every so often. Driving through it is incredibly bad news, as you get thrown into a spin and – usually – into the crash barriers on the side of the track.

The game is actually quite difficult to get the hang of – which is the basis of its interest, it's what makes it worth playing. I was always spinning around and oversteering. Once you get to grips with the controls, it actually becomes quite exciting, and you can start taking risks like sliding corners at gradually higher speeds. It's certainly not **Pole Position**, but it gives a different angle on the tried and tested formula.

OK, so what's the verdict? Compared to **Grand Prix Simulator** – without the licence – it's extremely over-priced. Nevertheless, it's actually a bit better and definitely a more entertaining game.

Well worth a look, though definitely to be avoided if you've got **Grand Prix Simulator**.

And I wouldn't be surprised if Electric Dreams is a tad miffed with Codemasters, having just had to shell out lots of cash for the **Supersprint** licence■

TWILIGHT

PETER SHILTON'S HANDBALL MARADONNA

SIMULATION Label: **Bug Byte** Author: **Icon** Price: **£1.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Tedious football game that badly tries to cash in on Diego Madonna's publicity, miss at all costs

Hello. Do you know me? Whoops, sorry, wrong sportsman. The infamous Dingo Primadonna strikes again. In this – yet another BB re-release, you get to be him-of-the-holy-hands Peter Shilton. But wait. Before you get all over excited, there's more. You get to save five penalty shoots taken at you by assorted players, some of whom have some pretty astounding tactics. I didn't know for example you could curve a ball backwards through 270 degrees. The Diego disease perhaps? Another famous person tie-in to disappoint the unwary millions■

★☆☆☆☆ ☆☆☆☆☆ 1

DEF COM

ARCADE Label: **Bug Byte** Author: **In-house** Price: **£1.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Hideously unplayable game even worse second time around

The year is 2056 and SDI has finally been switched on. It works pretty well. On the night before Christmas, a friendly bunch of aliens decided to take over the Star Wars technology and turn it against the Earth as a weapon. So, what does the Earth do? They send an anti-aircraft plane. Fine, and guess who's flying it?

Controls are standard left/right/up/down/fire and all you have to do is fly over a rotating globe, shooting the aliens. This isn't easy because the aliens move fast and you don't. Also, when you turn, your view doesn't change. Talk about cutting corners.

Another sub-standard cheapo. Avoid■

★★☆☆☆ ★☆☆☆☆ 3

DRAUGHTS GENIUS

STRATEGY Label: **Rack-it** Author: **In-house** Price: **£2.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Timothy Closs**

Nice conversion of an essentially insomnia-curing game. Pretty graphics

Hmm... Draughts Genius sounds like the cowboy who fitted my double glazing. With this game Hewson has tried to do for that ancient board game what Domark did for Trivial Pursuit – and haven't done a bad job of it.

The setting is Einstein's study. Scientific paraphernalia provides the backdrop, whilst a neatly drawn 3D board separates you from the man himself. You can play against a friend or the computer, or simply watch ol' Alfy play himself. Your pieces are moved by simple cursor control, and the computer responds at a specified skill level. Level one response is instantaneous, but you'll have to wait half an hour for a move at level eight!

Little ditties strike up at various stages of the game, whilst Einstein does Roger Moore impressions with his wrinkles. Overall, it's as good a game as you could expect from an essentially dull concept. Would appeal to draughts fanatics, but I can't see it converting the average game player into a hardened chequer board freak■

★★★★☆ ★★★☆☆ 7

SUN STAR

ARCADE Label: **CRL** Author: **Glenn Cassin** Price: **£8.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Technically sound idea but the Spectrum hasn't the capabilities to carry it out

Way back in the mists of time, a company by the name of Ocean released a game called Transversion. In the game, the player had to fly around a grid colouring lines. I always wondered what it would be like to be in that ship, racing across the lines and now it looks like CRL has granted my wish.

In Sun Star you get to fly around a grid collecting energy crystals and shooting thingeys. Wow! Sounds OK. Does it have astounding graphics? Well, no, it doesn't. It has a few lines drawn in perspective to make a grid and whatever colour fills in the gap defines what is in the square, ie, blue is a wall, green is an energy pulse, etc. So, the game relies heavily on colour. Unfortunately the Spectrum cannot come up with the goods and comes up with colour clash or blank spaces. Not one of CRL's best ■

★★☆☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ 4

ZONE

I am what you may call one of your more mature readers (OK, we will – Ed). At 40 I suddenly took an interest in computing at Christmas last when I bought a 128K+2. What can this box of tricks do? I thought. Well even I enjoy playing games. I even went and took a course in 'Computer Studies' at my local I.T.e.C. and now hold a City & Guilds 726 certificate. Not bad at my age, ay. I have also used my computer know how when applying for jobs. At present I am an artist – I draw dole. Even so I manage to afford the quid every month to buy your wonderful, excellent magazine (creep,



creep), and I have also been able to purchase Exolon from Hewson. This is the best game I have played to date and I agree with you, it well derserves its Classic.

Must go now, I have still to devise a program to help me boil my black puddings and wash me flat cap.

Alan Highcock
St Helens
Merseyside

PS Sorry about the poxy typing.

● *It's OK – Roy at our very wonderful (just kidding, chaps) typesetters will sort it out...*

Plugging!

I thought you'd like to hear of a new Play by Mail game Civilisations – which contains some elements that are believed to be unique in the field of PBM gaming.

For a players start-up fee of a cool fiver and a subsequent 75p per game move you can make interact with all the players in the game – at least when you meet them. There is even going to be a game magazine available soon after launch.

I'll tell you one interesting feature just to get you interested – a legal system within the game that can be used by all players as well as the police force (game of course!). The idea opens up unlimited scope for a PBM game.

For a start-up pack or information write to Adventure Plus Enterprises, 11 Shrewsbury Road, London N11 2LL

Anthony White
London N11

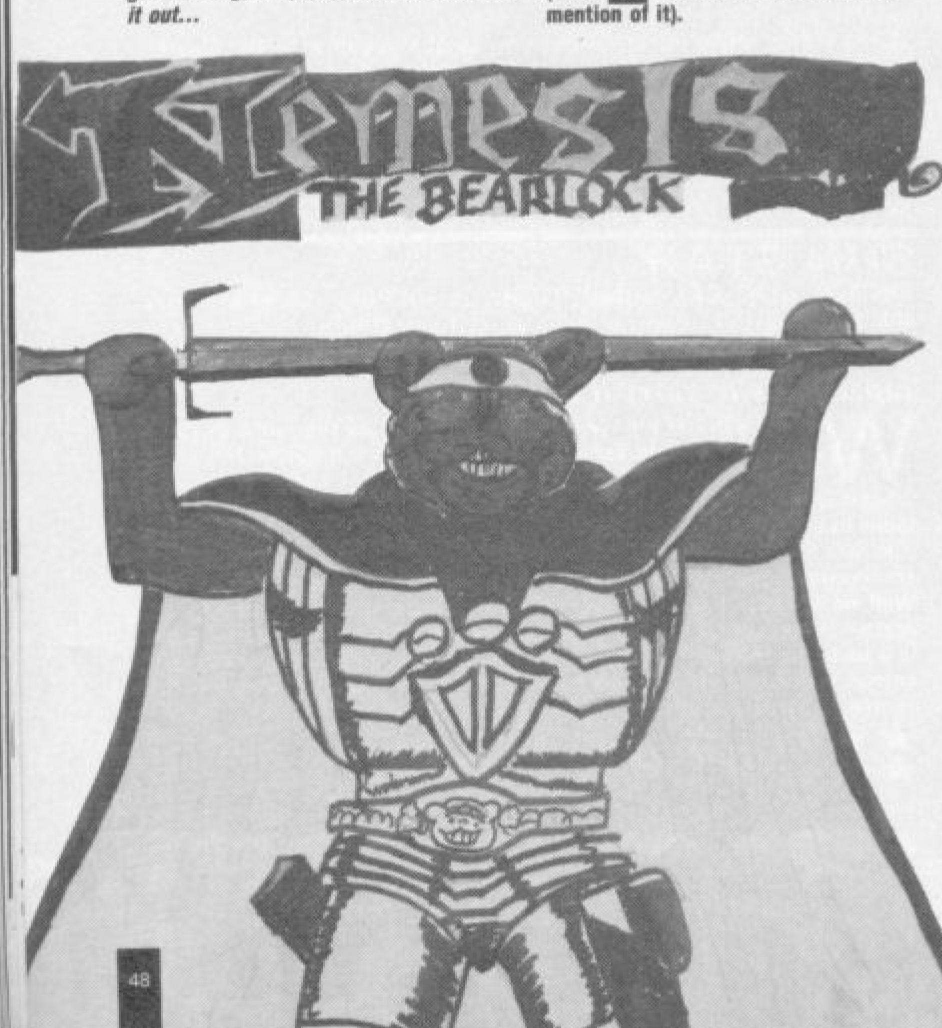
● *Thanks for your letter Anthony. Seemed a bit like a blatent plug for your game to us but, what the hell...*

Perplexing!

Dum de dum.. SU 66...la de da...software companies' expensive licences...tum tee tum...no add-on disc-drive...boo be boo...super fast, mega colourful, no colour-clash scrolling with groovy 128K soundtrack...bop de bop...Huh? What's this? Datel Electronics advertising *16K Rampacks for ZX81!!?* This is utterly ridiculous because they haven't said if it is non-wobble. Disgraceful

Daryl Kayes
Reading

PS You lie! You say SU has always rated software out of five. Nope, before the 5-Star system was introduced in late 1985 there was the acclaimed Gilbert factor (older SU readers wince at the very mention of it).



SPECIAL OLDSTERS CORNER

When I was a teenager things were a lot more organised than you appear to be now. I mean, you could go to the cinema for four pence and still have eight pence left over for a sticky bun on the bus home. That's how organised we were.

You and your staff appear to be out of the office more than you are in it, do you really exist?

Contrary to popular belief. Jono comes from Devon instead of Dorset and spells his name without an 'H'. Organisation please!

You're raving mad pal!

Yours most sternly,

Jon Riglar's mum
Plymouth
Devon

● *Sorry. We really are ever so sorry. Ever so.*

Posing pressure!

This letter was originally going to complain about the fact that I have not yet received my Poke cards, Star Raiders poster, nor my music cassette, but as you will have now got them in the post, I will change my subject to... 'The Truth about Jon Riglar'.

After extensive research carried out by telephone, I feel I am qualified to tell all about one of the most controversial people ever to appear in your mag.

He doesn't wear Porsche sunglasses, they are in fact Ford Cortina bifocals, and he only got them for the free furry dice to put on his pram.

As for his shorts, they are C&A 'Back To School' grey, and his supposedly sunburnt feet are normally encased in Mothercare baby bootees. He has asked me to mention Pamela Jane Bush, as he hoped I would insinuate that he had some sort of erm.. 'private life'.

Well, tough, Jon, it's time you came clean and admitted that Miss Bush is in fact your infants school teacher. All his columns are in fact written by his hamster which is infinitely more intelligent than he is, and who reads him bedtime stories. Even so, its quite easy to slip something false into his column.

Remember all that guff about the Sound FX being the same in Cobra and Ping-Pong? I fed him that and he was stupid enough to let his hamster write it.

He has a teddy bear called 'Claire' in memory of Miss Edgely, who used to work at SU. He thinks Amaurote (sooo boring!!) is the best thing since Farleys Rusks, and his dummy is joystick shaped.

When shown a copy of Pyracurse, his only comment was 'Goo, Goo look at the pretty doggy'. He has a memory like a sieve, and his spelling is worse than mine!

He wears 'Plymouth Potty Trainers', romper suits and thinks that Orville the Duck is 'Gaa Gaa Gurgle!'

Perhaps this information will persuade you to employ someone who knows the difference between Manic Miner and Legend of Kage.

Your faithfully,

Someone who has been waiting to get their revenge on Riglar for ages

Jon 'ZX Zapper' Rose
Bognor Regis

Perverse!

Aan ode to that swingogrilliant sex symbol of a rather hunky dory chappy? (That geezer who writes Zap Chat).

Ahem...

Oh, that swingorilliant sex symbol of a rather hunky dory chappy? (that geezer who writes Zap Chat)

Pamela Jane Bush
Was
Half an hour late
Beware!!
The PCW Show
You really should!
Fin
1...2...2...cheerio now

Yours in a multitude of ways tread carefully, The Legendary Ghost Writer

PS – This month's What Am I? quiz: I'm fluorescent blue, have two short sleeves and look just like a T-shirt.

ANSWER: I'm a fluorescent T-Shirt.

Perhaps...

In the July SU Surgery, David Gilmore of Luton complained that his 128K+2 keep resetting itself and even turning off.

All Rupert Goodwins could say was, "You have a very sick Spectrum indeed,"...SACK HIM!

The solution to the strange problem is simple. Inside the core of the lead from the power pack to his 128K+2 are several wires. One of these has snapped, so that every time the lead moves the tiniest bit, the two bits of wire break their contact and, hey presto! Your Sepctrum power pack is kapputt! The solution? Get a new power pack and lead.

R S Starkie
Windermere
Cumbria



Planeful!(?)

I thought I should point out a spelling error in your mag.

Your Arty LP Sleeves chart should read: No 5 FLM by Mel and Kim, not KLM. I hope you're not offended by my letter, and I still think that SU is the best computer mag on earth.

Jamie Denney
Colchester
Essex

● *First, yes of course we're hugely offended – what did you expect? Second we always meant the airline, not the record – I mean it was only a feature about records, so why not throw in a few planes too?*



LETTERS



Regarding your September issue Whodunwot section headed Yuppie Attack – I was horrified that you put such a game in your mag.

My son is twelve and was about to have your magazine as he'd just obtained a Spectrum off his brother, but I'm afraid the magazine will now be banned from the house.

You've only to look at the back of your book to see what age group writes to you. Really you don't need to pedal this kind of tripe in order to sustain an otherwise informative mag.

What a shame.

Mr and Mrs Golding
South Molton
Devon

● *Sorry if you were offended but the Whounwot section is a 'news' section and 'Yuppie Attack' was simply reporting a major release from a major software house. The book from which the offending game is taken was the top-selling book last Christmas, selling over a million copies! Maybe, instead, you should wonder at the people who made it a hit by supporting it with their pennies...*

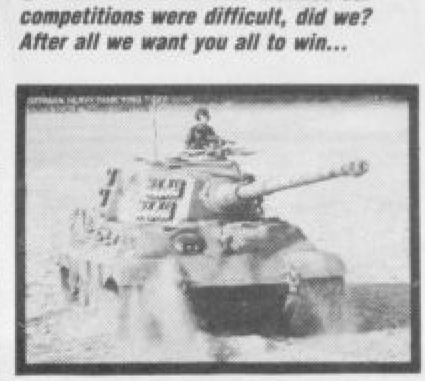
Concerning the recent competitions to be found in SU. Yes, SU is the top, up-to-date, jazziest, most on-the-ball mag on sale. But I am not sure you realise that the average IQ of your readers is more than 2!

For example, the 'Wild King Tiger Tank' compo in your August issue. You actually claim that this competition is difficult?? I completed it on my way home from the newsagents! (a two minute walk).

Come on! I have to agree with Jeff Fuge of Bristol. Let's have a decent competition for a change

Philip Hinson
Stockport
Cheshire

● *I don't think we ever claimed our competitions were difficult, did we? After all we want you all to win...*



I am writing to say that I am disgusted with Sugar-brain for not warning 128K+2 owners about the 128K+3 before it came out. He should be banished to Siberia and sentenced to watch repeats of Crossroads for the rest of his life

Leigh Roberts
Swansea
West Glamorgan

● *And that would be being lenient*

OK! What on earth happened to the final solution of Short Circuit you promised us in June's edition?

We had been playing Short Circuit for half an hour, when it says that the final part is in July's edition. So we rushed upstairs to get our July issue. Was it there? Was it 'eck?

Lee Wardle and John Bird
Coalville
Leicester

● *So you caught us out. So what's new? It was in the August issue...*



Give the Mad Celt a pat on the back (Pat! Pat!) The Twazzock Test was absolutely, utterly, brilliant! I am rated as a cool person. The Mad Celt does look nearly as cool as me, but as you know, I'm so cool I make the North Pole look as hot as Africa.

I thought you'd be interested too that I did take my Spectrum abroad on holiday with me. We had a wonderful time, I bought it sunglasses, a hat and an ice-cream. But then on the return journey it was taken into quarantine...

Michael Adams
Inverness
Scotland

PS and remember now, – stay cool!

● *Something obviously went seriously wrong with our ratings system*

Pushy!

While I was in the bath the other day, playing with my rubber duck (insert your own joke here), I suddenly had a thought.

How do you become a writer for a magazine such as yours? Do you have to be good looking, intelligent, charismatic and witty, I thought? and then I read some of SU and I thought not. (Only kidding boys and girls, oh, and of course, the office pet, I think he's called the Mad Celt...).

Anyway, I concluded that you have to be a man (including Jim Douglas), or wear shades, or have an incredibly huge pair of interfaces, or, finally, you have to be criminally insane.

I personally consider I qualify on all counts, and unselfishly will offer my services.

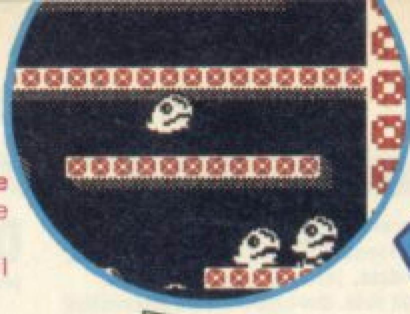
Paul Matthews
Watford
Herts

PS Will the Editor please get his hair cut?

● *The answer to your question is of course, yes, yes, yes, yes. And can I please point out that at least one member of the team is not a man, does not own an incredibly huge pair of interfaces (whatever that may mean), and her criminal sanity is none of your business whatsoever. Further the Editor has indeed now had his hair cut which was a considerable relief to all concerned*







Bubble

Pah! we said. Bah humbug!! we said. We won't like it!!!

Thus we prepared for **Bubble Bobble** – self styled 'cute' game of the year. We wuz ready to spit all over **Bubble Bobble** until it was quite soggy.

So I was most put out to discover that the wretched thing is, as Firebird has been telling us for simply ages, incredibly addictive.

Not that it's any excuse for the nauseating cuteness of the whole thing. I mean, the idea of playing a bubble-blowing brontosaurus is enough to make you lose your beef an' onion Crispy Pancakes straight off.

What makes BB so addictive and, if we're going to be perfectly honest here chaps, so damned good, is its simplicity. All you gotta do is blow bubbles, burst 'em and eat food. What could be simpler? What could be more dull? But it ain't dull. It's dead good y'see.

It's a bit like **Pac Man!** You play the bottom-waggling bronto of uncertain sex, and, for no apparent reason (I like these games with no plots, don't you?) it's up to you to clear innumerable screeens of enemies. Once you've cleared one level, up pops the next, right on number 80!!

Each screen has little ledges to jump on. You can jump up *through* the ledges, and land in the middle, but you've got to jump off the end. So as the screens get more complex, with little boxed in bits, moving round the place gets harder. And there are more enemies to bump off and time starts to run out. There's a lot of frantic bubble blowing going on.

Because bubbles are what it's all about. What you have to do is trap each enemy in a bubble, head butt said bubble, and watch the now deceased creature fly about all over the

FACTS BOX

Nauseatingly cute version that is nonetheless horribly addictive. Definitly has love-hate potential

BUBBLE BOBBLE
Label: Firebired
Author: Software Creations
Price: £7.95
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

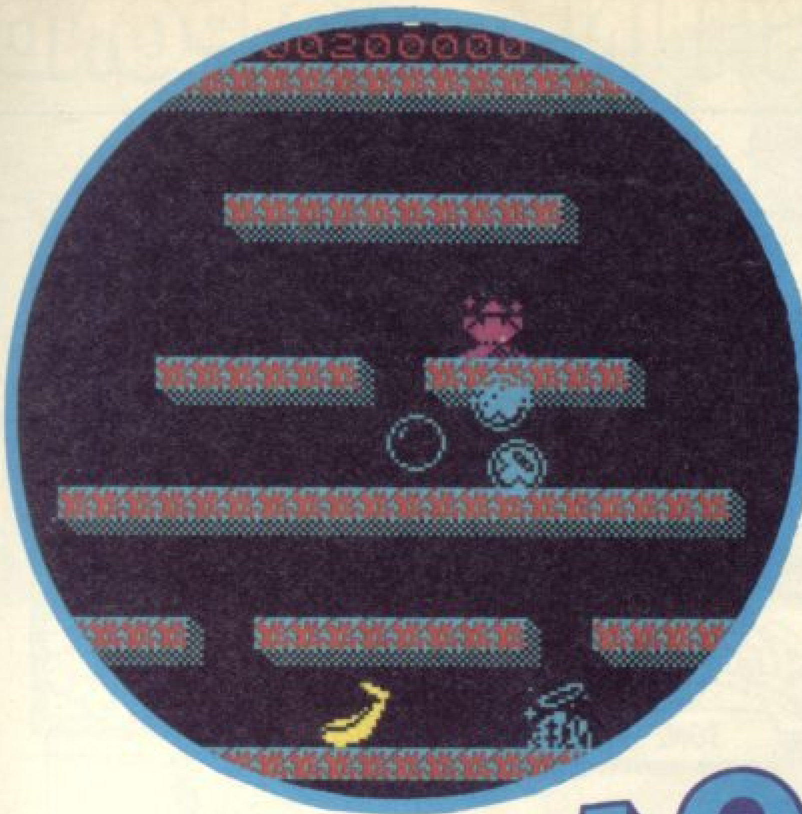
Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★★☆
8











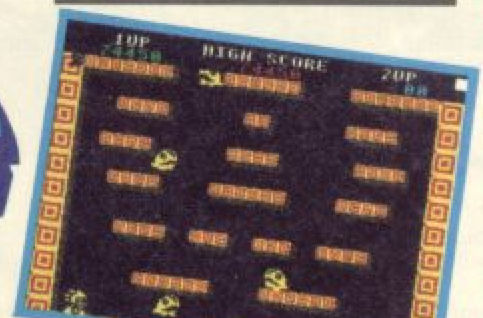
ARCADE REVIEW

PROGRAMMERS

MIKE FOLLIN was responsible for the conversion of **Bubble Bobble** to the Spectrum. As well as one or two games that he's just not prepared to admit to, so don't bother asking, he worked previously on the excellent **The Sentenel**

SOFTOGRAPHY: Subterranean Striker (*Insight*, 1984), Vectron (*Firebird*, 1986), **The Sentinel** (*Firebird*, 1987)

TIM FOLLIN (brother of Mike) did the music and asked to have a little plug



Bobble

screen like a rapidly deflating balloon. When he lands, he'll turn into a choice piece of grub, such as a cake or burger with dill pickle. Eat the grub and watch the points mount up.

And that's more or less it. There are a few finer things in the game, such as varying villains, bonus points and gigantic apples wot drop on yer 'ead.

Villains come cleverly disguised as clockwork skull efforts, sort of evil looking birds, and a fishy thing which I gather is the ring leader of the lot. You get a bonus screen of purple onions every now and then, too, and land a gemstone, or the aforementioned giant apple, and your score will take a gentle upward tilt.

Oh, and should you see a bubble with water in it, burst it, and you'll be caught in a fast-flowing ride across the screen. Sort of brontosaurus in a boat job really. Might take you to where you want to go, then again, might not.

Coupled with this there's a cute (quelle a surprise) soundtrack that you'll enjoy for about two minutes, and then turn off in exasperation. Very clever it is, but also incredibly infuriating.

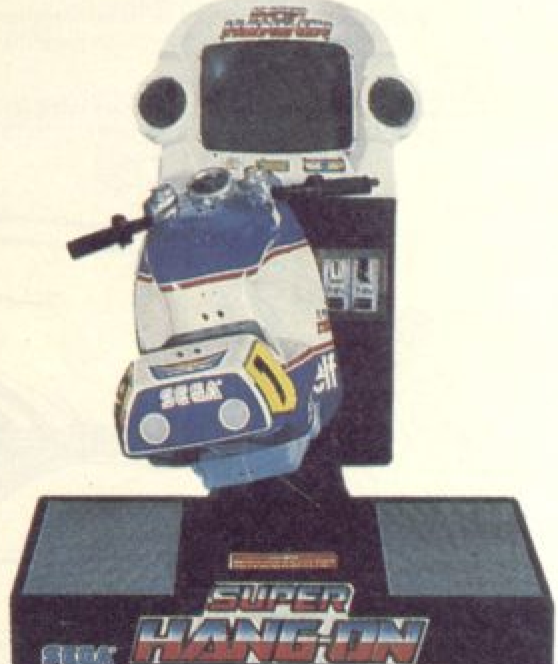
There's not much more to say about **Bubble Bobble**, except that I still dislike the idea of it, but I do still need to get to level 10 next time around■

...

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ENDANGERED SPECIES

Not so much an arcade game, more a lesson in ecology. Scientists estimate that every hour another species becomes extinct. Your job is to voyage around the world in your ship, the "Sewage Warrior", speeding things up a bit.

On the Canadian icepacks you have to chase and club baby seals; on the majestic African plains, gun down a few elephants; in South America, direct the slash-and-burn operations to decimate the forests; and in Japan, pour your toxic sewage into the sea in just the right amounts to kill off the fish without actually setting fire to the ocean.

Each level of the game is prefaced by a heart-rending plea for existence from a baby animal, which you have to shoot to gain extra points. Further "panda points" can be gained by evading ecologists, eroding the ozone layer with strategically placed pollutant spray bombs, and bagging Richard Attenborough■

ENDANGERED SPECIES
ARCADE Label: *Naffsoft* **Author:** *IPCO Chemicals* **Price:** *The Earth* **Memory: 48K** **Joystick:** *None*



THE A-TEAM

A text-only adventure game. With a very very limited vocabulary (*Shoot. Kill. Chase. Grin maniacally*) and a certain sense of deja vu about the scenarios, this one isn't likely to set the adventure world alight.

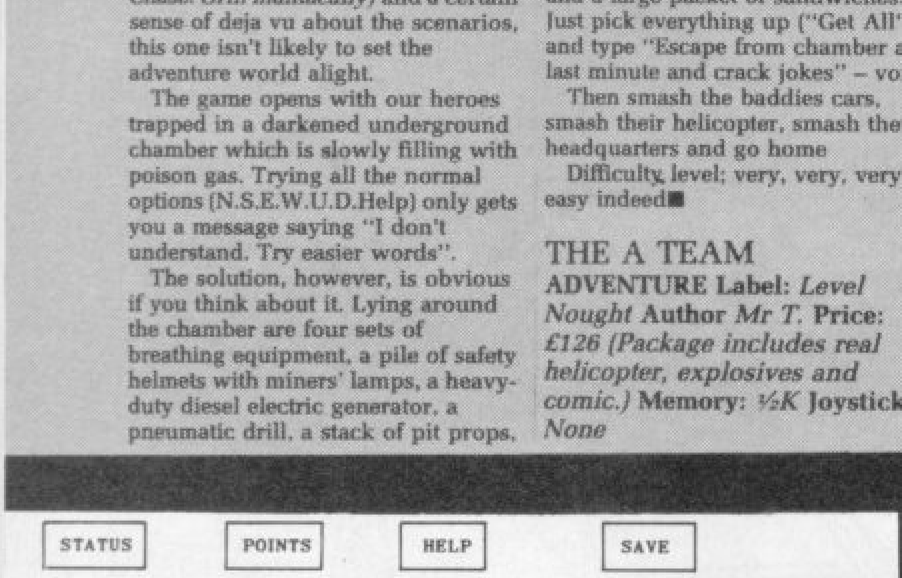
The game opens with our heroes trapped in a darkened underground chamber which is slowly filling with poison gas. Trying all the normal options (N.S.E.W.U.D.Help) only gets you a message saying "I don't understand. Try easier words".

The solution, however, is obvious if you think about it. Lying around the chamber are four sets of breathing equipment, a pile of safety helmets with miners' lamps, a heavy-duty diesel electric generator, a pneumatic drill, a stack of pit props, some reinforced steel joists, 500 metres of tempered chromium cable, a lift cage, a manual on "Mining Techniques and The Construction of Underground Shafts and Elevators" and a large packet of sandwiches. Just pick everything up ("Get All") and type "Escape from chamber at last minute and crack jokes" – voila!

Then smash the baddies cars, smash their helicopter, smash their headquarters and go home

Difficulty level; very, very, very easy indeed■

THE A TEAM
ADVENTURE Label: *Level Nought* **Author** *Mr T.* **Price:** *£126 (Package includes real helicopter, explosives and comic.)* **Memory:** *½K* **Joystick:** *None*



WIGGY STARDUST

Also known as the **Pop Star Construction Set, or Beat The Branson.** In this menu-driven game, you must assemble the pieces needed to build a pop star, collect enough money to pay for the plastic surgery, choose a record label and make your bid for pop stardom.

The number of combinations available is almost unlimited. Starting from the top, you can have a Rasta hairpiece with bows (Boy George), a huge frizzy red wig (Cyndi Lauper), a bald wig (Pet Shop Boys) or a bleached pan scourer (Madonna). The choice of noses is even larger – there are seven Michael Jackson varieties alone.

Around the chest area, you have to make the crucial decision of whether to go for the "two hippos in a plastic sack" Samantha Fox look or keep it safely flat. Legs are an equal problem – you could go for the all-purpose Madonna pins, but how many? (maximum of six).

After tacking together your all-purpose pop star, you have to select a name for your band (*"Trouser Experience", "Wee Wee Vostock", "The Scabs"* etc) then make your bid for fame. Racing around the playing board involves various hazards; Tony Blackburn won't play your record (back one square), Tony Blackburn does play your record (back ten squares) and so forth.

Don't worry about the music – it all sounds the same on the Spectrum anyway ■

WIGGY STARDUST
ARCADE Label: *Probably Domark* **Author:** *Mike Reid* **Price:** *£11.97* **Memory:** *5K* **Joystick:** *Fender, Gibson, Yamaha*

CARE BEARS NINJA ASSASSINS

An arcade adventure with a heartwarming difference, as the cuddly Care Bears set out to find the Magic Gem which the wicked Poogle has hidden in the Nasty Housing Estate.

You have five Cuddly Car Bears to control, each one of which has a different function. Braveheart Bear specialises in silent killing, Babylove Bear in demolition, Sweetcuddle Bear in heavy weapons, Exceptionally soppy Bear in torture, and Lola Bear in something which isn't made quite clear in the instructions. With nothing to protect them against the bogeymen of the Nasty Housing Estate (except flamethrowers, ninja throwing stars, hand grenades, Ghurka Kukris, nun-chakas, Baretta machine guns and the power of true love – all selected from pull-down menus) the brave bears have to negotiate level after level of the housing blocks, cheerfully shooting, burning, maiming, demolishing and stamping on anything which gets in their way.

Not recommended for younger children■

CARE BEARS NINJA ASSASINS

ARCADE Label *US Dross* **Author** *Minion soft* **Price** *Too much* **Memory:** *48K* **Joystick** *only easily breakable ones*



OND RO ARS

WEAKLY THOMPSON'S BORATHLON

Surely not even the most avid joystick-waggler would enjoy this compilation of the last five remaining pastimes not already converted to computer games.

In "**Stamp Collecting**" you have to arrange a number of stamps on a page, then start all over again when your auntie sends you a postcard from Austria. "**Bird Watching**" is even slower; a lavishly detailed landscape in which, quite simply, nothing happens.

"**Train Spotting**" is next; as the trains appear on the screen, you have to take a note of their numbers. The game continues until you fall asleep.

Test your powers of alertness with "**Pigeon Fancying**"; a series of birds fly across the screen, and you have to waggle the joystick at the correct speed to show how much you fancy them.

Weakly Thomson's best event is saved until last; it is, of course, "**Scraping the Bottom of the Barrel**"■

WEAKLY THOMPSONS BORATHLON
SIMULATION **Label:** *Dullsoft* **Auhor:** *J.R. Hartley* **Price:** *£9.95* **Mmory:** *128K* **Joystick:** *Various, steel-cased recommended*

SPOTTY!

What some kids get up to! Ho,ho,ho,ho! Tee-hee! Well I never! This budget title could only have come from Fireblasters, the budget software label run by the British Institute of Chartered Accountants. Fireblasters spokesman Tarquin Marketing-Person explained it this way. "Well, basically, it's a strategy game. Strategy game? Is that what you call them? Or do I mean an arcade game? Yes? Well, it's one of those. . . excuse me, my phone's ringing. . . yes? Oh, Simon! Yes, lunch. . . yes, Fatties at 11.30? Must be back by 4.00? Yes, ciao. . . Where were we? Oh, yes, '**Spotty**'. . . yes, it's an adventure game featuring a schoolboy, and you use one of those, erm, whatd'yecallems, joysticks, and the idea is to link up all the spots on this kid's face before. . . well, I don't know, before they get better or something. Machines? Oh, Spectrum, C64, BBC, MSX, Amstrad CPC, PCW and PC, QL, Atari ST, Amiga, Einstein, Macintosh, Apple II, Oric, Aquarius, Newbrain, Jupiter Ace, ZX81, IBM mainframes and Cray XMP-1. Should be out sometime in 1989 but you wouldn't beleive the problems we're having with the licensing company – Clearasil – they have to approve everything and it takes ages■



SPOTTY
ARCADE Label *Fireblasters* **Author** *None as yet* **Price** *99p (or free with petrol coupons)* **Memory** *16K probably* **Joystick** *we expect so*



BARBARIENNE

Barbarienne is a slash 'n' hack game with a difference. While other combat games exploit stereotypes of male violence and female submissiveness, **Barbarienne** is a glittering example of a socially conscious and generally right-on game. The background is a primitive settlement (possibly East Cheam). There are one-and two-player modes. In each case the two combatants face each other across the blood-splattered earth, armed with mighty swords bearing names of power such as BrainBiter and GutStabber, and must do battle to the death for the favours of the Princess Barbarienne.

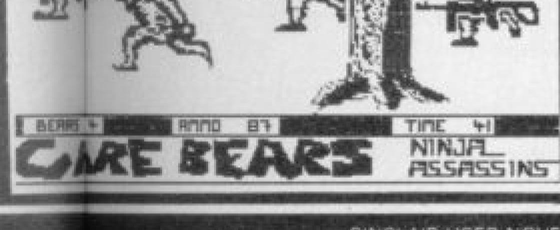
Before starting you must assign each warrior prowess points in several categories, such as Foulness of Breath, Scariness of Bodypaint and Size of Chopper.

Fighting moves available include the Shin kick (not very effective), the Belly Poke, the Nose Bite and the lethal swift half.

However, none of them ever get put to use, because as you press Enter to commence combat, Barbarienne the warrior queen appears, shouts "Don't be so childish! You men are all alike!" and storms off, putting an end to the game.

The packaging features photos of very severely-dressed women haranguing weedy little men, and the game should appeal to anyone who finds offence in titles such as **Barbarian, Game Over, Athena, Mystery of the Nile** ■

BARBARIENNE
Label: *Palais Games* **Author:** *G. Grear* **Price:** *£9.95* **Memory:** *147K* **Joystick options** *None whatsoever*



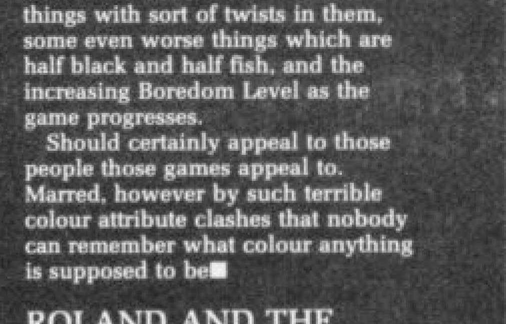
ROLAND McDONALD AND THE CAVERNS OF APATHY

Heeee. . .eee. . .eee.(cough). .ee e.eeeyyy!!!! It's our old friend Roland, back again in his fifteenth adventure from Goblin Gamelets!

This time wacky Roland has five thousand, two hundred and thiry-six levels to complete in his quest for the Purpose of Life. But in the Caverns of Apathy, it's very easy to get bored stiff after the first hundred levels and wish you were watching *The Price Is Right* instead!

Zany Roland has only his Nose Bazooka, a bag of exploding Plops and a copy of Swann's classic of social analysis *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu* with which to defeat the Big Bogie and find the Secret. (Here's a clue, kids – stand on the book, place a Plop on top of the filing cabinet and use the Nose Bazooka to destroy the third antelope. Make sure you're standing in the right position – one pixel out and the game crashes).

Roland has to avoid exploding wardrobes, man-eating pizzas, pneumatic head-crushers, horrible great spikey things, long purple things with sort of twists in them, some even worse things which are half black and half fish, and the increasing Boredom Level as the game progresses.



Should certainly appeal to those people those games appeal to. Marred, however by such terrible colour attribute clashes that nobody can remember what colour anything is supposed to be■

ROLAND AND THE CAVERNS OF APATHY
ARCADE Label *Goblin Gamelets* **Author** *Luke Smith* **Price** *£7.95* **Memory** *Only too well* **Joystick options** *Yes*

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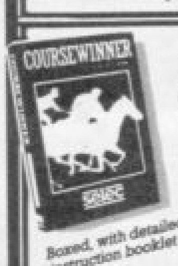
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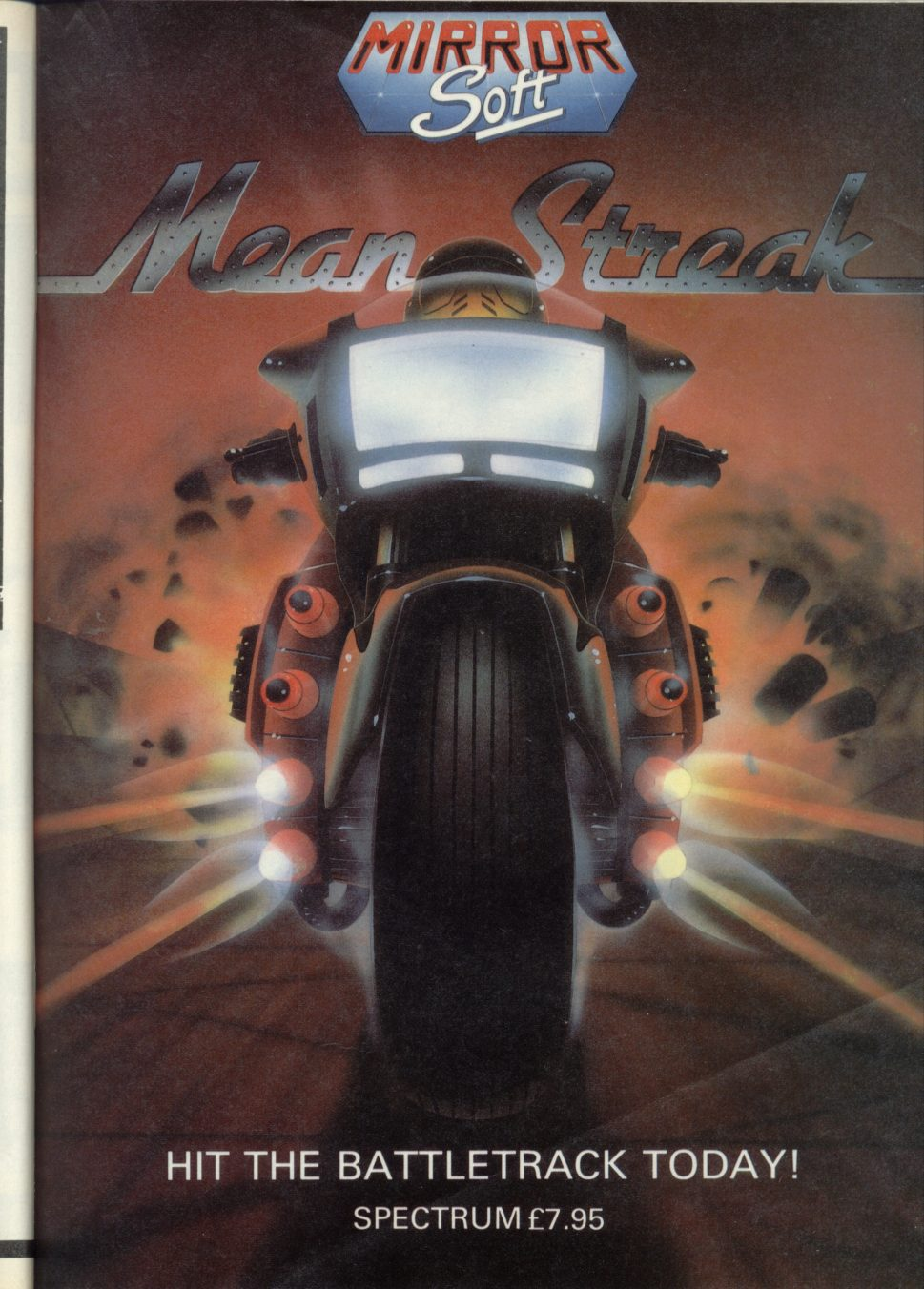
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I f you wanna get ahead getta **MASK**!

-Yup. the boys from the books, comics and thoroughly bendy toys have appeared on the screen in their own computer game (at last).

Just the other day, **MASK** arrived from Gremlin, still faintly glowing, and promised to be mighty tricky Guv.

The scam goes something like this. Hero Matt Trakker (looking remarkably like a member of the Douglas family, Kirk or Mike – I defy you to tell the difference) is jetting about in space in his car Thunderhawk looking for his mates and trying to find and blow away the VENOM base.

It's all done in plan-view in four scrolling landscapes. The first one's called Boulder Hill and it's very yellow.

At first you've no idea what's going on. Stand still for a second and you'll get blasted before you can say sha-boingggg! by loads of tanks which rumble into the screen.

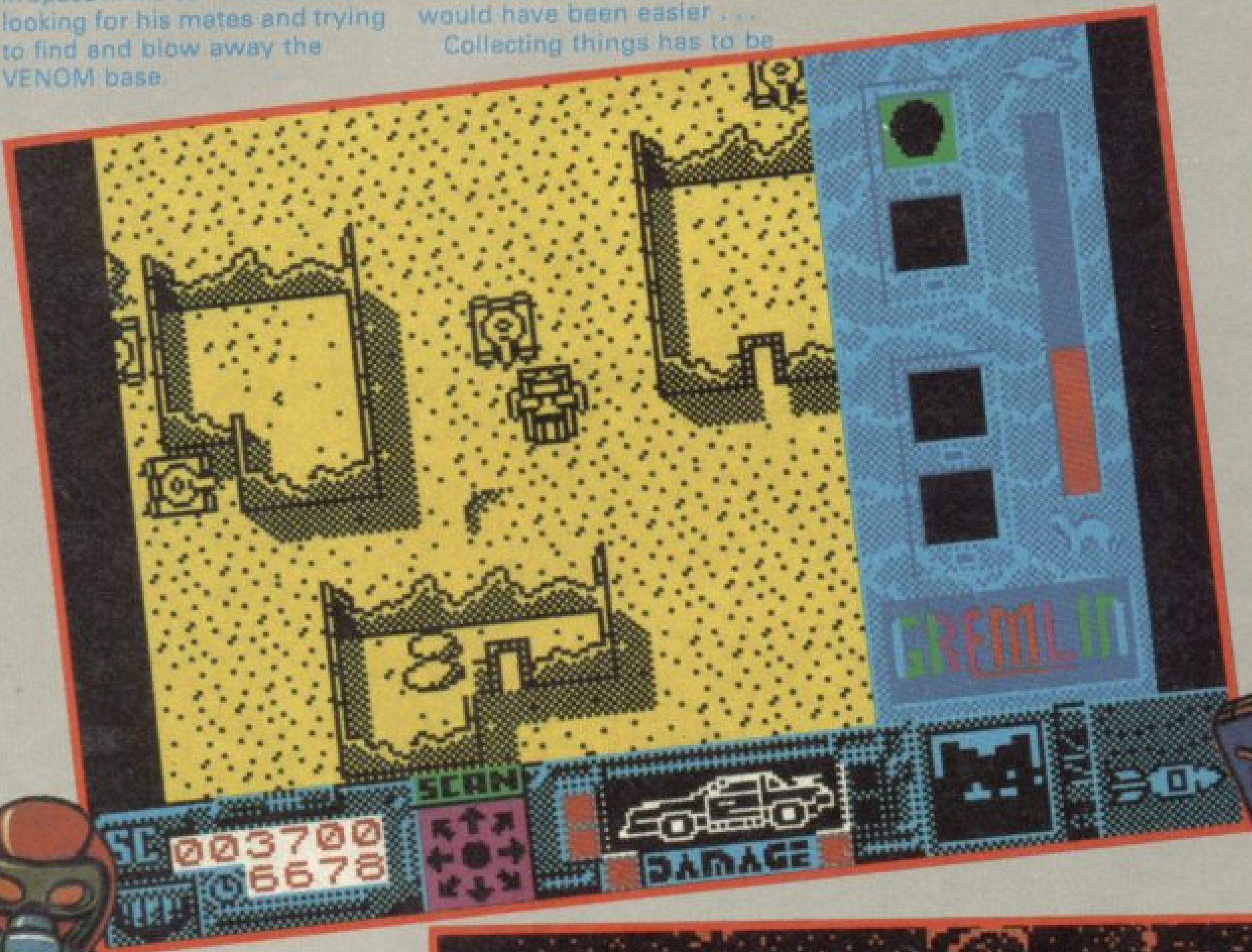
To avoid having your bits blown off first time out, you have to work out what's going on – which means reading the lengthy instructions. And so detailed are they that I very nearly decided to play **Eastenders** instead. Well it would have been easier . . .

Collecting things has to be done in order or you won't get anywhere. Firstly, find and pick up a scanner, by driving over it. Then, collect six pieces of a scanner security key in the same method. Then switch to the Assembly Screen, and put the pieces of key together to form a letter. Then, and only then I might add, can you activate a scanner, and locate the first of your missing agents.

Well. (Are you still with me on this? Not far to go now). Having racked my brains to shreds to get the key together, I promptly got blown up. That's not the idea! The idea is to get the

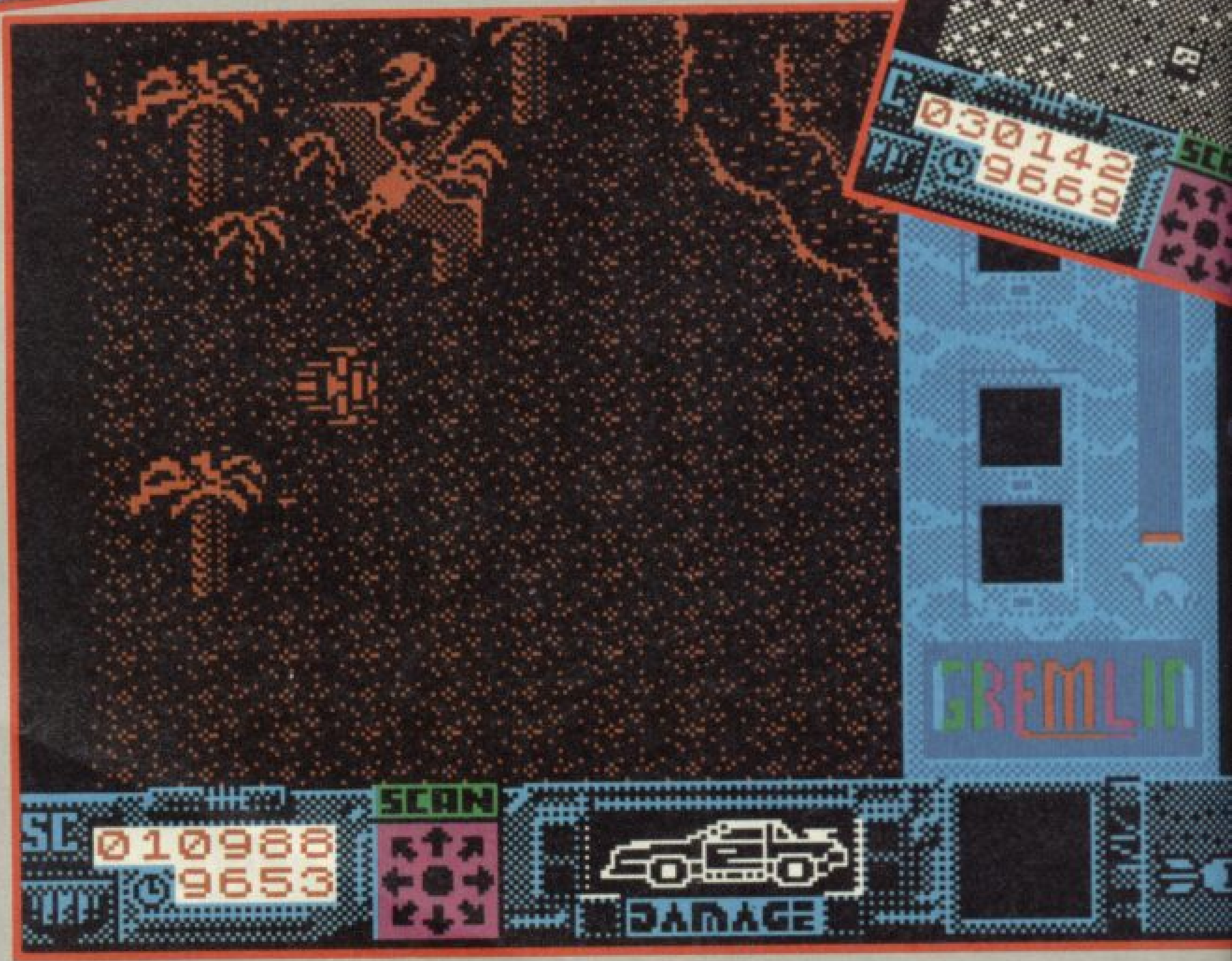












HINTS AND TIPS

- **Use your bombs carefully. There's no point in dropping them near tanks or suchlike – they'll only move away and you'll have wasted time (not to mention a bomb). Instead blow up solid objects so that you can explore more parts of the landscape**
- **Pick up the six pieces of the security key before you even think about trying to assemble it. Then try each bit against each other one. It doesn't take long because the computer won't let you put two pieces together that don't fit**
- **Keep your eyes peeled. Bits of security keys, the odd scanner, even a mask, might be hidden somewhere you wouldn't think of, and you can't afford to miss anything. Get up those rocks and look around a bit**
- **Remember where the repair kits are. Each kit will repair two units of damage, and you can't pick up a kit unless you've sustained that amount of damage. Keep repairing Thunderhawk regularly, and you'll be all right**



agent, find his mask (only he can open the box that his mask is tucked in) and then when you've got both agents and both masks get the hell out of there.

Get all the agents, all the masks, bomb the VENOM base, and you're home and dry.

I must admit that I didn't like **MASK** at first. The graphics are strictly monochrome, and Gremlin is gleefully employing the same 'momentum' movement that was used in **The Final Matrix** which means you move about like you're on ice.

Things whizz about pretty quickly, and while you're still trying to get yourself together, something bombs the hell out of you, and it's back to square one.

So I was getting pretty impatient. Then suddenly I'd found my first agent and I was hooked . . .

One of the good things about **MASK** is that it's big, but not too big to handle. There are four main locations, Boulder Hill, Pre-Historic, Far-Future and the VENOM base itself. Each contains a variety of different things to dodge and destroy, including freight trains, pterydactyls, erupting snakes and exceedingly unpleasant giant spiders. What with the scanners, keys, repair kits and agents to pick up and collect, life is never dull when driving Matt Trakker's Thunderhawk.

There's something for everyone in **MASK**. It's one of those games that employs elements of shooties, thinkies, arcadies – you name it, it's there. And far from being overly complicated, it's all really accessible and highly addictive.

By far the hardest part is assembling the security key, which is what really lifts **MASK** out of the ordinary.

The only blackish mark on **MASK**'s character is I'm sure some people will quickly get bored with being unable to assemble that key, and may decide **MASK** is just too complex to bother with.

Hopefully though, there aren't too many who'll think like that because, if **MASK** is one thing, it's definitely well worth persevering with■

ARCADE ★ REVIEW

FACTS BOX

Jam-packed with puzzles to solve and enemies to destroy. Needs patience, perseverance, and more than a little luck!

MASK
Label: Gremlin
Authors:
Price: £7.99
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★★★★★★☆ 9









PROGRAMMERS

TONY PORTER wrote **MASK** on the Amstrad and then converted it across to the Spectrum
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Barry McGuigan's Boxing** *(Activision, 1985)*, **The Eidolon** *(Activision, 1986)*, **Gauntlet** *(US Gold, 1986)*

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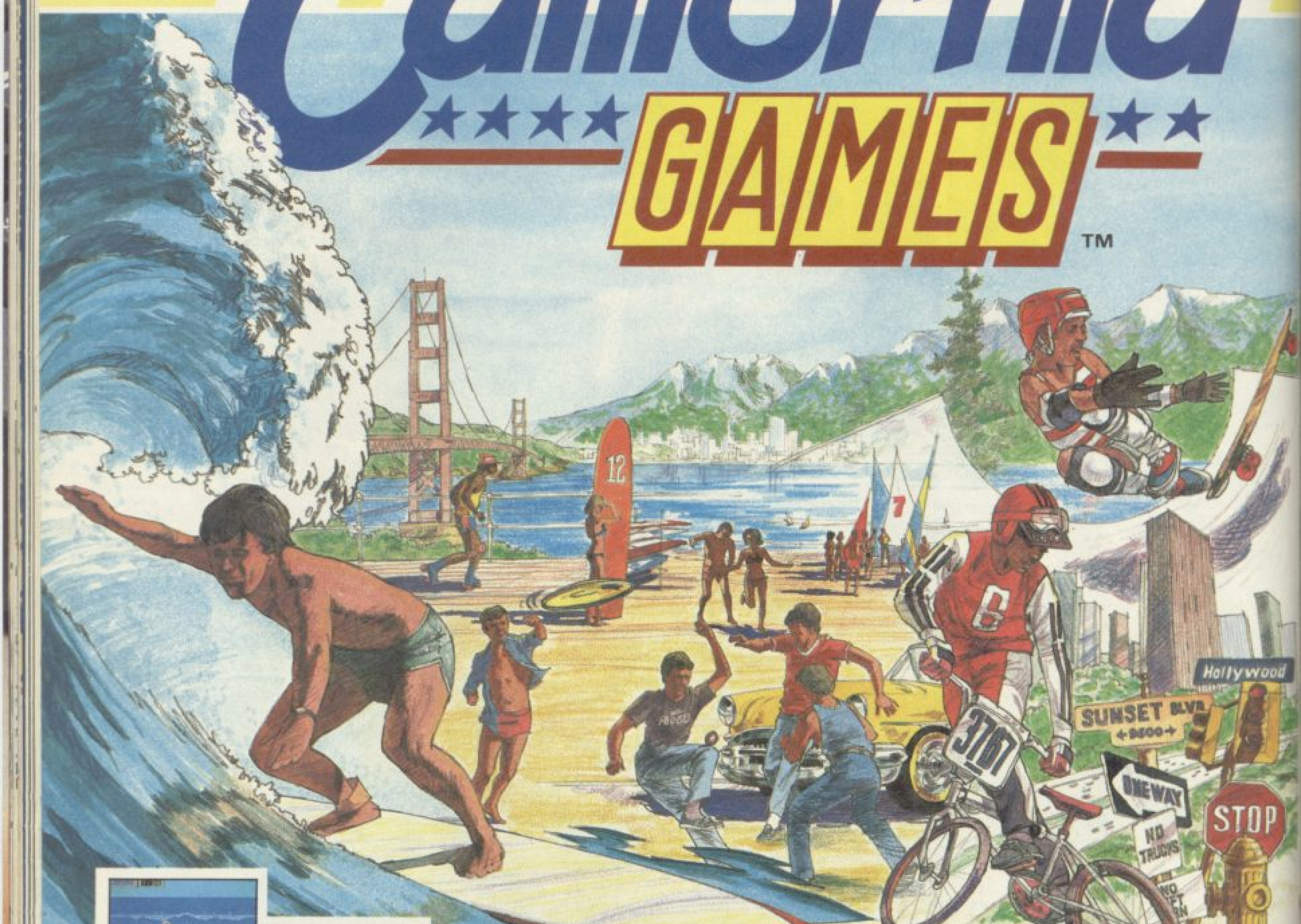
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Screens as seen on Commodore 64

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RENEGADE

by Mike Lamb

The first problem I had with converting Renegade was getting to play the original game! We had a reference machine in 'Arcade Alley' (used only for work of course) at Ocean, but whenever I went to check things on it, somebody else was playing it, at one point there was a lock on the machine to stop other programmers skiving off work! Eventually we made a video of the game to the end, which was for more helpful because I could watch it without having to play the game.

The first decision I made was not to scroll the screen horizontally as the arcade version does. On the Spectrum this takes lots of processing time and isn't really essential to the game play. Leaving out the scrolling out also gave more freedom to Ron Fowles, the graphic artist, to design colourful backgrounds without getting attribute clashes.

Having made that decision the main programming problem with the game became one of squeezing everything into memory, rather than moving sprites around quickly enough. The brief allowed for two *Loads* for the 48K version, but personally I don't like multi-load arcade games. It works well enough for slow strategy type games, but for a game like Renegade where the action can take less than 1 minute for a level, a lot of playability is lost by having to wait a minute for the next section to load in. Besides with 11 different characters in the game, each needing an average of 50 positions, it would have been easy to fill the 128K machine. Obviously they would have to be compressed somehow.

The first way of saving memory was to share the legs between all the characters, since I was working with monochrome sprites this worked fairly well – did you notice? The only graphics that suffered were the girls with whips in the red-light district, they looked much better in mini-skirts and black stockings.

Another way to compress memory was to only store the graphics facing to the right. When a left facing graphic is required, it can be generated from the same data using a look-up table in which every number from 0-25 has its bit-reflection stored. This cuts the memory required for graphics in half.

Most games used pixi-masks for sprites. These are a bit like photo-negatives of the graphics, used to make a 'hole' the screen where the sprite is to be printed. So, as well as storing the data for the graphics, the mask data has to be stored as well. I spent a lot of time developing a routine that generated the masks from just the graphics data. This was too slow to use as the game was in progress, but between each level, I could throw away the old masks for the characters in the previous level, and generate the masks for the new characters. This meant that the graphics not being used only took up half the room they would otherwise have done and also saved Ron the work of doing the masks by hand.



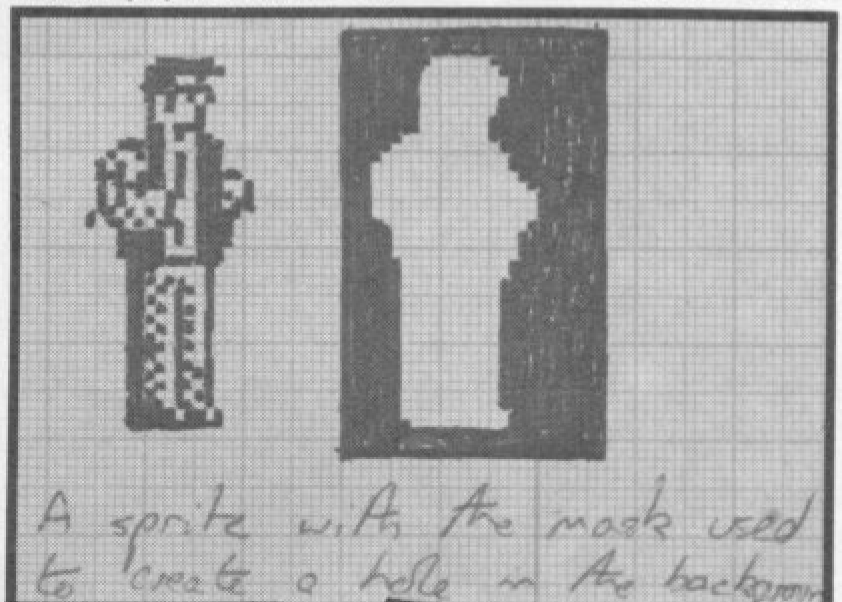
The technique I used to print the sprites was explained to me by Jon Ritman (author Match Day, Batman and Head Over Heels,) when he visited Ocean. It involved taking a window big enough to wipe out old character and print the new one in and printing on it first the background and then each sprite in order of priority. Then the window was dumped on the screen. This method is relatively slow but it had the advantage of not requiring a back screen, thus saving 4K of valuable Ram.

One decision I made which I'm now quite pleased about was to change the control method. The arcade original had an 8 way joystick, a button to hit left, a button to hit right and a button to jump. That's fine if you've got a joystick, but you'd need to be an octopus is you hadn't! I changed it for a new system, such that the fire key could be used in conjunction with the direction keys to produce the same effect.

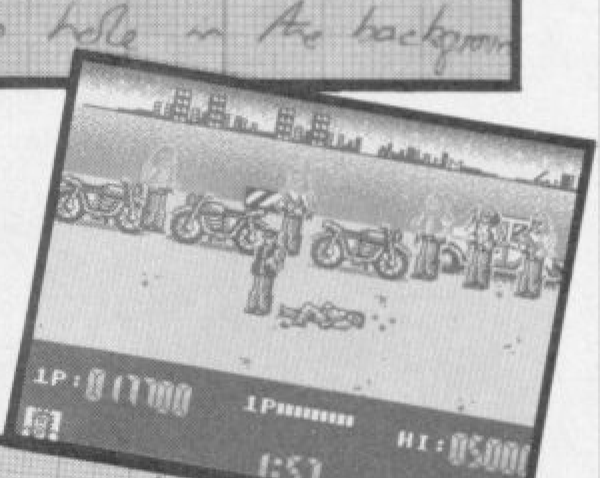
Unlike Top Gun and Arkanoid which I also wrote for Ocean, Renegade was finished in plenty of time for the release date at the PCW Show. This meant we got feedback from the reviewers before the final version was sent for mastering. The reviews were pretty good in general, but one common complaint was that the game was too easy. It's true, I could go through the game without losing a life but I thought that was because I'd had so much practise by the time it was finished. Anyway the version in the shops is a far bit tougher than some reviews might suggest.

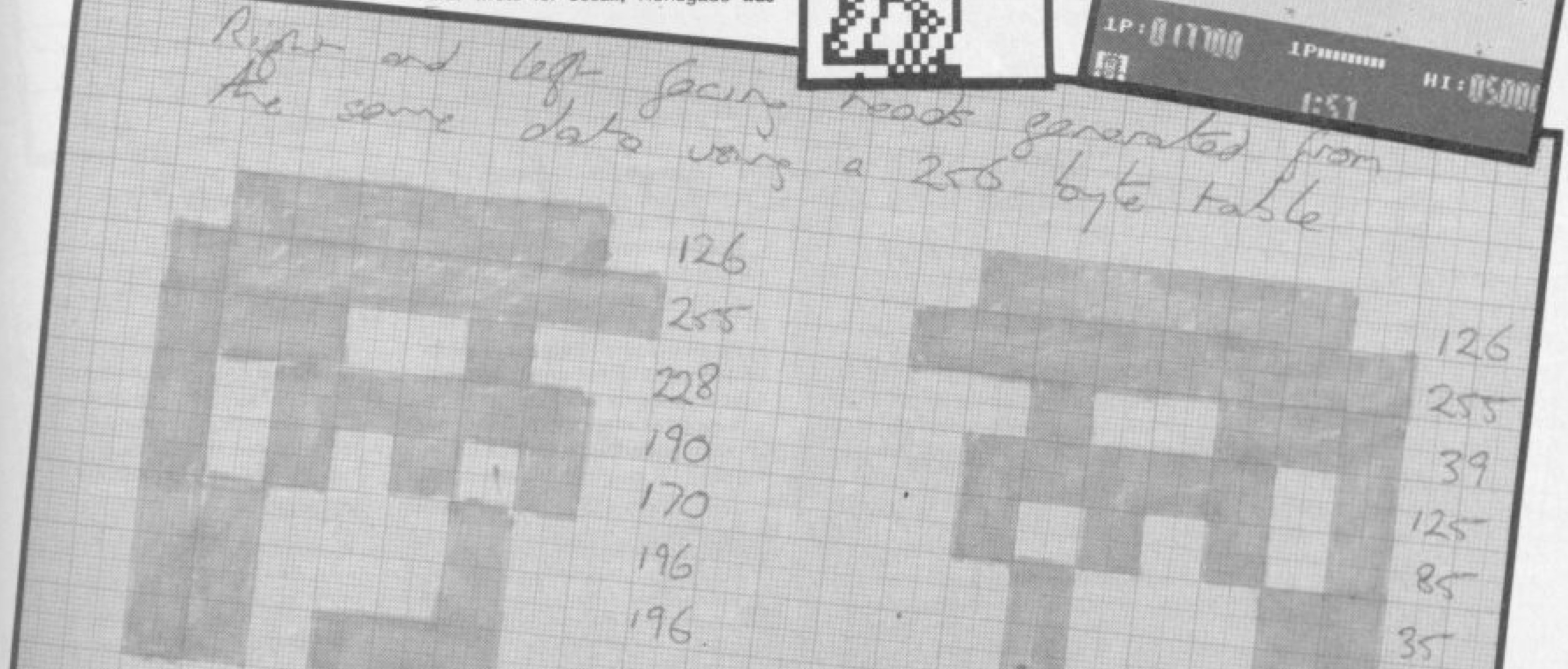
Overall I am fairly happy with the finished product and was particularly pleased to have produced a game playable on the basic 48K Spectrum. I think it's important to remember there are still a lot of people using only a 48K Spectrum with no joystick interface.

Mike Lamb









ADVENTURE

REVIEW

Adventures are just about the only kind of games you can write without a detailed knowledge of machine code – thanks to *The Quill* and *GAC* adventure creator programs. These two utilities are the reason why so many adventures are written and published by 'one-man' software firms. All it takes is good ideas and a strong imagination to compete on an equal footing with the professionals. . .

Pride of the Federation

FACTS BOX

Four part space adventure with terrific puzzles and atmosphere. A delight, but unfortunately a tad pricey

PRIDE OF THE FEDERATION
Label: Excalibur software, Unit 209, Telsen Industrial Centre, Aston, Birmingham B6 6TN
Author: CG and SG Groves
Price: £6.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tony Bridge

★★★★★ ★★★★☆ 9

The bad news is the price – £6.95 is just a little bit too much for this one.

Even though it's a four-parter, each part is pretty small, and presentation is stone-age **Quill**.

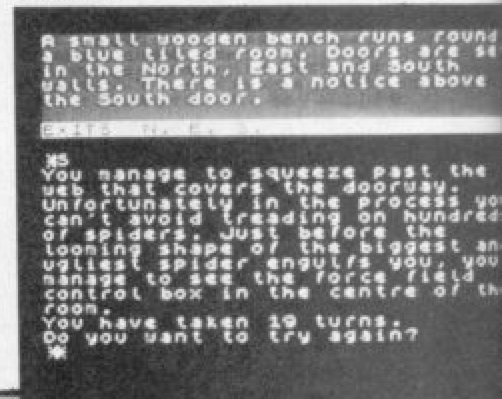
However, from here on, everything is good news. **Pride** has been written by someone who really knows their adventures, and all the little problems that adventurers like to be confronted with.

You take the role of John Pride, a lowly detective on the trail of drug pirates, the four parts of the story taking you from a poppy-covered artificial farm satellite via teleport back to your spaceship, which has been taken over by an evil alien presence, and finally to regain control.

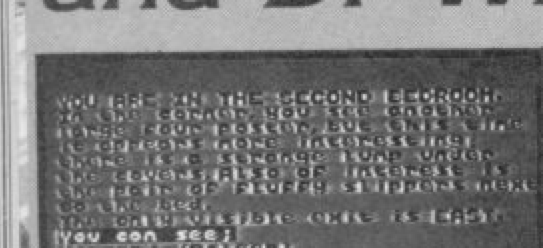
There's nothing sensationally original here, but is is superbly crafted.

The first part is a good illustration. After every few moves, you must fill your bottle with water and drink, so you must never get too far away from the source. There is a short cut, but you can't carry more than a certain number of objects when using it. Several forcefields block your way until dealt with, while creepy-crawlies can put an end to your toils all too soon. To add to all your troubles, there is a kleptomaniac android who will come along at just the wrong moment and upset all your object-juggling by nicking the most important one! And this is just the first part...

A subtle sense of humour, plenty of knowing winks in the direction of well-loved adventuring cliches, puzzles of all kinds as well as a great atmosphere make this **PAW'd** adventure an absolute delight to play■



Sheerluck Holmes and Dr Witsend



Now here's an example of a well-written effort from a trio of guys using **The Quill**, a nice sense of humour and a lot of imagination.

In **Sheerluck Holmes and Dr Witsend** you play the great detective of the title, your task to get on the trail of the evil Orri Marti who, it appears, has kidnapped the Queen of England! From the great artwork of the cassette cover, to the very neat loading and credit screens, this program has obviously had a lot of care and attention lavished on it. Presentation is always more than half the battle, and in this case it makes the adventure a delight to play.

Speccysoft has a light touch with humour, and manages to whip up the atmosphere and a good picture of London in all its sleazy glory without any graphics, with Witsend getting on your nerves and various other characters playing their parts.

There are plenty of objects to use, and plenty of puzzles, though in the main, these are not too difficult despite an occasional lapse in logic.

I'll be looking out for more games from Speccysoft■

FACTS BOX

First effort from a very promising new outfit. Good ideas and great presentation make it worth a look

SHEERLUCK HOLMES AND DR WITSEND
Label: Speccysoft
Author: Adam Morris, Greg Jackson
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tony Bridge

★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ 8

Labours of Hercules

FACTS BOX

Object lesson in how to write a Quill adventure. Brilliant stuff. The best value adventure this month

LABOURS OF HERCULES
Label: T Taylor
20 Lee Road, Barcup, Lancs OL13 0EA
Author: Terry Taylor
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Tony Bridge

★★★★★ ★★★★★ 10

At £1.99 **Labours of Hercules** is the best value I've seen this month.

Not only do you get a great adventure, but you also get some education as well! Don't let this put you off, though – the Herculean myths are great stories, which is why they've lasted thousands of years.

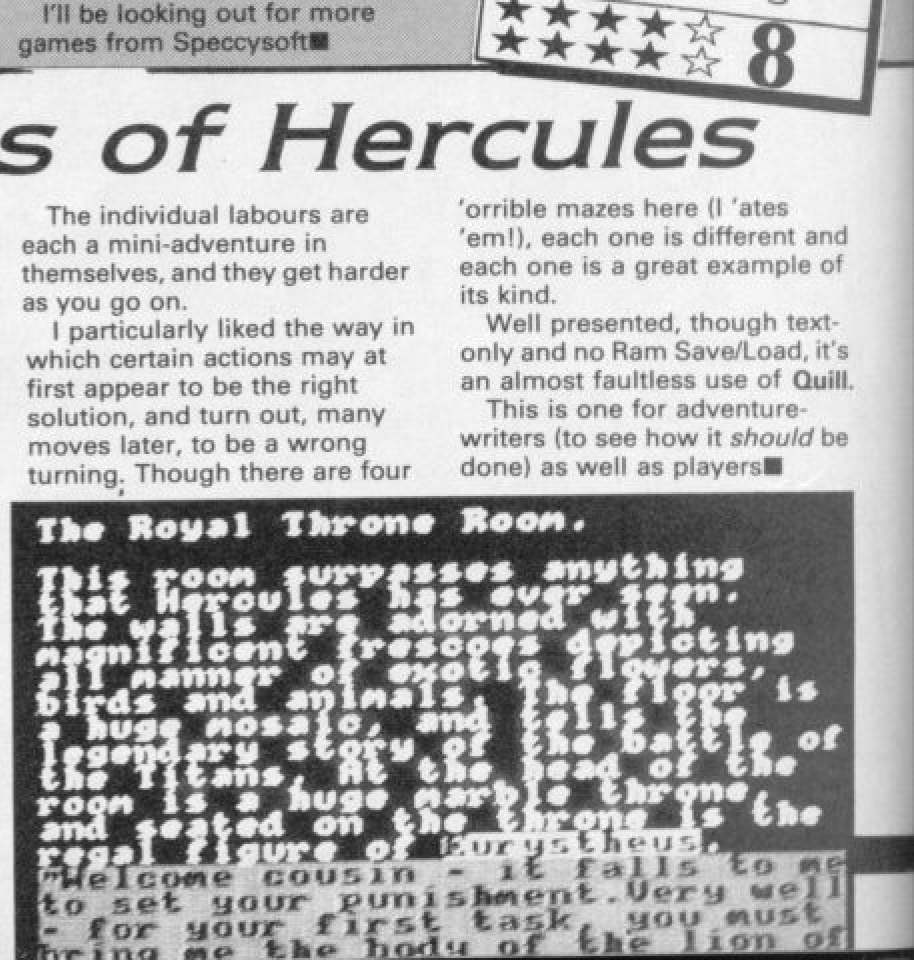
To atone for killing his wife and children in a drunken rage, and to gain immortality, Hercules is set twelve arduous tasks by Eurystheus, King of Mycenae. This scenario has been tried before with varying success, but the story stands repeated telling, and Terry Taylor has done a grand job.

The individual labours are each a mini-adventure in themselves, and they get harder as you go on.

I particularly liked the way in which certain actions may at first appear to be the right solution, and turn out, many moves later, to be a wrong turning. Though there are four 'orrible mazes here (I 'ates 'em!), each one is different and each one is a great example of its kind.

Well presented, though text-only and no Ram Save/Load, it's an almost faultless use of **Quill**.

This is one for adventure-writers (to see how it *should* be done) as well as players■



The Prospector

Tom Frost is a name writ large in the anals of adventuring history as the man who solved the **Ket Trilogy**. By day a mild mannered Scot, by night an adventure writer, he publishes his own **Quilled** programs under the imprint Tartan Software.

Dedicated to spreading the adventurers' creed far and wide, he has produced a number of introductory titles as well as some which are rather more for the adventure aficcionado.

The Prospector, I suspect, will pan out as one of his tougher titles, but is well worth persevering with.

As you might be able to fathom from the title, this adventure is all about gold and the rugged days of the wild wild west. You have to overcome all sorts of obstacles (including silly things like laws) in your single-mined – sorry, minded – search for gold. No man, no door, no law is gonna stop you! 'I come from the far west, stranger. . . that's why they call me. . . Ealing Broadway!' You know, the mythic west with people in different coloured hats and lots of horses and gun play and suspicious looking gunmen and. . .

Frost has done an excellent job of packing all that into an adventure. The feel of the whole thing is good, and the plot – which is very convoluted – is amply backed up by the graphics.

There are some old adventure favourites here – you get hungry so you have to eat, the sun is too strong so you have to protect your head otherwise you die of sunstroke. Some of the things you need you won't be able to come by legally, so you have to remember that when you meet various people who might recognised their own property.

The lack of originality is more than made up for by the tricky puzzles■

FACTS BOX

Excellent Quilled adventure with a great plot. Should appeal to everyone who has a love of good adventure writing

THE PROSPECTOR
Label: Tartan
61 Baillie Norrie Crescent, Montrose, Angus DD10 9DT.
Author: Tom Frost
Price: to come
Memory: 48K/128K
Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★★★★☆☆☆ 7

The Calling

Travelling across the lonely Yorkshire Moors one night, you are stranded when your engine mysteriously cuts out. It's dark, and there's the threat of thunder in the air. Your companion, Jenny, volunteers to search for a house where she can phone the recovery services from, while you nobly stay with the car. After an hour, though, you begin to get worried. After all, you've seen the **Rocky Horror Picture Show**! Steeling yourself against the driving rain, you trudge off in the direction you think she took – up an overgrown driveway to a spooky looking manor house...



Created using **The Quill** and attendant programs this is a neat effort. It reads well. The location descriptions are neither so long that you fall asleep or so short that you miss them. The text is ably supported by the graphics, which, given the nature of the beast – a quickie, **Quilled**, cheap adventure – should be applauded. They are tasteful, complementary to the plot, and have obviously had some thought put into them.

It's nice to see that there's a 128K version included on the other side of the tape with more graphics, more objects to fool around with and more text in the descriptions■

FACTS BOX

Excellently plotted Quilled adventure with great descriptions and neat graphics. Real value for money

THE CALLING
Label: Visual Dimensions
59 Nunnery Lne, York YO2 1AH
Author: T Taylor, P Neary
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K enhanced
Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★★★★★☆☆ 8

TWILIGHT

THE HAND

ADVENTURE Label: **Pearl,** 41 Uwch-y-Dre, Corwen, Clwyd, LL21 0BP, **Memory: 48K/128K** Price: **£7.95,** Reviewer: **Tamara Howard**

Original idea – Masonic romp through hall of political power spoofing the rituals. Not much cop, though

Should you be a Freemason, know a Freemason, or think you might like to be one in the near future, then don't read this.

And don't buy The Hand. What we have here is a serious mickey take of masonic rituals and behaviour. Concerned chiefly with probing deep into all sorts of little secrets that the boys at Whitehall would rather you did not probe about in, The Hand is otherwise an unremarkable sort of adventure. Go north, pick up this, read that. Even the location descriptions lack the merest trace of atmosphere. Too many of the puzzles are solved mainly by luck rather than skill. In it's paranoia The Hand is entertaining for a bit, but it's not going to be the greatest adventure of all time ■

★★★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ 3

CORNILIUS

ADVENTURE Label: **Bismilla, 32 Boreton Street, Roath Park, Cardiff** Price: **99p (P&P free)** Memory: **48K/128K** Reviewer: **Tony Bridge**

Unfortunately, Cornilius shows everything that can go wrong when adventure-writing utilities are used by a bunch of banana-fingered computer-thugs. I mean, these guys can't even spell their own name! And that's just on the first screen – after that, things go from awful to Omigod.

The authors have gone for blood-and-yucchs – you have to eat a severed hand to stave off the Hunger routine, and the locations are lovingly described as you wander around a spooky castle trying to escape. A promising scenario maybe, and one that has been used to good effect by other writers. In this case, the effect is completely ruined by some of the worst spelling, grammar and layout that I have ever seen.

All this is beaten only by the poor use of The PAW. The word list is so constructed as to not recognise universal abbreviations for standard adventuring words like *Examine,* so that frustration quickly sets in.

There's little point in going on. I'd still only give it two stars – one for a good price, the other for a good laugh■

★★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ 2

THE RETURN OF SOCK

ADVENTURE Label: **Spectrum Adventure Club,** 21 Winchester Avenue, Cardiff Price: **£2.00** Memory: **48K/128K** Reviewer: **Tony Bridge**

Reasonable value and atmospheric. But is the world ready for another Star Trek spoof? Probably not

Space, the Final Frontier. . .Though not to the writer of this adventure, who takes his life in his hands in this highly unoriginal plot by taking the mickey out of the venerable *Star Trek.* All the obvious rib-nudging name changes are made – you are Captain Burke, there is the Sock of the title as well as Zulu, Potty, Phones, Checkoff and all the others.

But somehow the atmosphere manages to transcend this unpromising wit. Return of the Sock is a busy little adventure, offering a lot of exploring – and a fair amount of objects, though not many that seem to actually be of any use. Unusually, there are lots of other characters around, although these don't seem to have much 'pseudo-intelligence' as promised in the blurb. Presentation is generally on the rather dull side, and the GAC has been used to create some fairly ordinary pictures.

Sock is a reasonable attempt at a good price – but do we *really* need another *Star Trek* parody?■

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆ 5

DEADLY MISSION

ADVENTURE Label: **John Henry Enterprises, 16-24 Brewery Rd, London N7 9NH** Author: **John Henry** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K enhanced** Reviewer: **Tony Bridge**

Earthman case meets Tryllan pirate in zzz-inducing adventure. So-so puzzling at a good price

Deadly Mission places you (Justin Case – oh dear!) in charge of a space-going vessel about to be attacked by the bloodthirsty Tryllan pirates.

This is a competent, though not particularly inspiring GAC'd effort, also available on Prestel. A few spelling mistakes and bad flag-setting count against it. Graphics are OK-ish, puzzles are simple and the price is right (a bit higher for the 128K version). As long as you don't expect too much from it, £1.99 seems a good price, even though there are better titles at the same price on the market■

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆ 5

ZONE

SECRETS OF THE INVISIBLE MAN

Andrew Hewson shows you how to put on a mask

A super, hyper, mega, bumper bundle of mail this month, partly because the editor seems to have been hiding some of my mail and partly because you seem to be very keen to write to me. Perhaps it's the effect of a long period of wet weather. Nothing better to do but sit indoors and play with your computers.

The first letter comes from Phillip Hendrik of Sheffield who asks **Please could you tell me what a "mask" is and what use is it? Also could you explain what reversing something in a "buffer" means?**

Sure thing Phillip. As with any other subject, people who are involved with it quickly develop their own jargon for discussing the work that they are doing. Once they get the hang of it the jargon is quite useful, but for the newcomer it can be a mite confusing.

The term "mask" is used to refer to the piece of a picture that must be cut out when a moving graphic image is placed on top of the main picture. Imagine for example that you want to show an image of a figure walking across in front of a house on the ZX Spectrum screen. The easiest way to do this is to draw a picture of a house on the screen and fill in all the colour, the windows, the brickwork, the sky, the ground, the pavement outside etc. You can imagine this job as being a bit like drawing a loading screen for a game. Now you want to put a figure in that picture and have him walk across in front of the house. Obviously you can construct an image of the figure using User Defined Graphics (UDGs). You can then write a little program to place the figure on top of the main picture. If you experiment using the *Print* instruction in a Basic program to print your UDG on the screen you will find that your figure blanks out too much of your background picture. This is because the *Print* instruction overwrites a complete character square at a time. Alternatively, you can use the *Print Over* instruction but the unfortunate thing is that this has the effect of making your figure appear transparent, so that the background shows through the form of your figure. What you require is to be able to cut-out from the picture an outline of your figure and then place your figure into that outline. This is what is called a "mask" and the technique is referred to as "masking".

The word "buffer" is used to describe the piece of memory which a program reserves for communication purposes. If you think about it, the micro-processor at the heart of the ZX Spectrum has to communicate with four different devices generally speaking. These devices are the keyboard, the screen, a printer and the cassette player. Of these four devices, three of them are buffered and the fourth, the cassette player is not.

We know the cassette player is not buffered, because when it is in use the computer is incapable of doing anything else. All Spectrum users are familiar with the stripey lines on the TV screen when a program is being saved or loaded from cassette. We know that when the lines are in evidence there is nothing else we can do with our computers. We just have to wait until the saving or loading process is complete. Contrast this with the situation when you press a key. The keyboard is buffered – there is a special system variable available called *Last K* at address 23560 which is used to store the value of the last key press that has occurred.

The exact mechanism works like this: 50 times a second the Spectrum interrupts what it is currently doing and takes a look at the keyboard. If a key is being pressed then it stores a value in the keyboard buffer which refers to the key being pressed.

More UDG problems

Please, please, please can you explain, pleads Glynn Winstone of Chepstow, **how to get more than 21 UDGs?**

When using the User Defined Graphics facility, up to 21 new characters can be defined and assigned one to each of the letter keys A to U. The form of each new character is stored in eight bytes of the 168 bytes reserved for this purpose at the top of the memory above Ramtop. The character assigned to a given key can be obtained by pressing the graphics key (Caps Shift 9) before and after pressing the letter key.

The method of encoding and decoding the eight bytes can be understood with the help of some knowledge of binary numbers. Every character in the Spectrum character set (and every new character created by the user) is defined relative to an eight by eight grid. Each element in the grid is called a pixel. Each pixel can be set to either the *Ink* or the *Paper* colour and it is the precise arrangement of the *Ink* and *Paper* coloured pixels in the eight by eight grid which creates each character.

Each of the eight bytes devoted to a character defines the setting of one horizontal line of eight pixels using the following system. The contents of a byte (which necessarily lies in the range of 0 to 255 in decimal) is read as an eight digit binary number so that there is a one-to-one correspondence between pixels and binary digits. A binary number consists of zeros and ones only. All pixels for which the corresponding binary digit is zero are set to the *Paper* colour whereas all pixels for which the corresponding digit is one are set to the *Ink* colour.

Very often the first and last byte of the group of eight controlling a given character are zero. These two bytes determine the top and bottom of the character respectively and a zero setting ensures that all the corresponding pixels are set to the *Paper* colour. Thus when the character appears on the screen it is well separated from other items on the lines above and below. For a similar reason each byte usually contains an even number which is also less than 128. As a result, all pixels at the right and left are also set to the *Paper* colour so that the character is easily distinguished from its fellows on either side.

When the Spectrum is first switched on the User Defined Graphics characters are set to a copy of the capital letters on the corresponding key. It is a simple

TABLE 4. Eight byte codes for forming lower and upper case Greek characters

LETTER	Lower case codes								Upper case codes							
Alpha	0	0	0	56	72	72	60	0	0	16	40	68	124	68	68	0
Beta	0	112	72	112	72	112	64	64	0	120	68	120	68	68	120	0
Gamma	0	0	72	48	32	32	32	0	0	124	68	64	64	64	64	0
Delta	48	64	32	48	72	72	48	0	0	64	96	80	72	68	124	0
Epsilon	0	0	56	64	48	64	56	0	0	124	64	120	64	64	124	0
Zeta	0	56	32	64	64	112	8	48	0	124	8	16	32	64	124	0
Eta	0	0	0	112	72	72	72	8	0	68	68	124	68	68	68	0
Theta	0	48	72	120	72	72	48	0	0	56	68	124	68	68	56	0
Iota	0	32	0	32	32	32	48	0	0	56	16	16	16	16	56	0
Kappa	0	0	72	80	96	80	72	0	0	72	80	96	80	72	68	0
Lamda	0	64	32	16	16	40	72	0	0	64	96	80	72	68	68	0
Mu	0	0	0	72	72	80	32	0	0	68	108	84	68	68	68	0
Nu	0	0	0	72	72	80	32	0	0	68	100	84	76	68	68	0
Xi	0	56	64	112	64	112	8	48	0	124	0	56	0	0	124	0
Omicron	0	0	0	48	72	72	48	0	0	56	68	68	68	68	56	0
Pi	0	0	0	248	80	80	80	0	0	252	72	72	72	72	72	0
Rho	0	0	0	48	72	112	64	64	0	120	68	68	120	64	64	0
Sigma	0	0	0	60	72	72	48	0	0	124	32	16	16	32	124	0
Tau	0	0	0	120	32	32	32	0	0	124	16	16	16	16	16	0
Upsilon	0	0	0	72	72	72	48	0	0	68	40	16	16	16	16	0
Phi	16	16	56	84	84	56	16	16	16	56	84	84	84	84	56	16
Chi	0	0	68	40	16	40	68	0	0	68	40	16	16	40	68	0
Psi	0	0	16	84	84	56	16	16	0	84	84	84	56	16	16	0
Omega	0	0	0	0	84	84	40	0	0	56	68	68	68	40	108	0

HEWSON HELPLINE

Once this simple job has been done, the Spectrum returns to whatever it was doing before it was interrupted. The value remains in the keyboard buffer until it is overwritten by a later key press or is ready by an *Inkeys* or an *Input* command in the main program.

The great disadvantage of the buffer system is clearly illustrated in this example of its use. The main program does not know or care when the user presses a key. When the program is ready it looks in the keyboard buffer to see if a key press has occurred. If a key press has occurred then the value is there for the program to use. Thus the effect of a buffer is to de-couple the running of the micro-processor from the device to which it is linked.

Another cherry of the byte

Letter of the month this month comes from David Platt of Sheffield. Who writes **I enclose a listing which will automatically mirror a byte. It saves all that tedious mucking about with tables!**

David is referring to the routine I printed a month or two ago to reverse the order of the bits in a byte. This little exercise has triggered a lot of reader response which would be very gratifying except that each respondant claims to have a better routing than mine. OK so mine was not particularly short or efficient and David appears to have produced the neatest routine of all. Well done David, you win a free copy of **Exolon** for your trouble.

```
10  FOR n=23297 to 23310
20  READ a: POKE n,a
30  NEXT n
40
50  DATA 58, 0, 91, 14, 0, 6, 8
60  DATA 203, 31, 203, 17, 16, 250, 201
70
80  INPUT "Number to be mirrored"; n1
90  POKE 23296, n1
100 LET n2 = USR 23297
110 PRINT n1; "mirrored is";n2
120 GO TO 80
```

TABLE 1. David Platt's Basic program for mirroring the contents of a byte

TABLE 2. David Platt's machine code routine for mirroring the contents of a byte

```
DECIMAL                ASSEMBLER
58 0 91                LD A, (nn)
14 0                   LD C, 0
6 8                    LD B, 8
203  31           loop RR A
203  17                RL C
16 250                 DJNZ loop
201                    RET
```

For those who are interested in using David's routine there is a Basic program which demonstrates how it works in Table One and the equivalent machine code is listed in Table Two.

Note that the byte to be mirrored is poked into address 23296. David's routine is simplicity in the extreme. He loads the byte into the A register and then rotates each bit rightwards out of the A register and leftwards into the C register. Very clever! It just goes to show that there is always a better way of doing every single programming job you have ever thought of■

matter to alter the characters. Table Three lists a Basic program which does the job. I have also listed in Table Four the numeric codes for the letters in the Greek alphabet.

TABLE 3. Program for defining new User-Defined Graphics characters

```
10   INPUT " ENTER THE LETTER TO BE REDEFINED "; A$
20   LET A$ = CHR$ (CODE A$ - 32 * (A$ > " £ " ))
30   IF A$ < " A " OR A$ . "U" THEN BEEP . 2,24 : GOTO 10
40   FOR I = 0 TO 7
50   INPUT " ENTER BYTE NUMBER " ; J
60   IF J < 0 OR J > 255 THEN BEEP .2,24: GOTO 50
70   POKE USR A$ + I , J
80   NEXT I
```

This system is designed to provide a set of at most 21 new characters but additional sets can be defined by altering the UDG systems variable which is held at 23675 and 23676. The number in UDG is the address of the first byte of the first graphic character, ie: the character assigned to the A key. When the Spectrum is switched on it is set to 56368 thus reserving 168 bytes for the 21 characters between the UDG address and the top of the Ram.

In principle UDG can be changed to point to any address in Ram but the simplest approach is to reduce it by 168 for each additional character set required. It is also necessary to reduce Ramtop by a similar amount so that the graphics characters do not interfere with the stack thereby causing the machine to crash. Ramtop is normally set to one less than the value of UDG and the *Clear* instruction must be used to alter it. Thus the procedure to create space for one additional set of graphics characters is to enter:

Clear 65199
Poke 23675, 176
Poke 23676, 254

The *Clear* command removes Ramtop down to 65199 and the two *Pokes* refer UDG to UDG = 176 + 256 ✱ 254 = 65200

This leaves 65536 − 65200 = 336 bytes between the address pointed to by UDG and the top of Ram which is enough space for two tables each 168 bytes long.

The User Defined Graphics facility is flexible enough for most purposes despite the limitation to 21 characters per set but the user should also be aware of the technique for redefining the ordinary character set.

There are 96 characters in the ordinary Spectrum character set. The set starts with character code 32 (the space or blank character) and ends with the copyright symbol (code 127). They are defined in an analogous fashion to the User Defined Characters by a table which is held in Rom at address 15616. Each definition is held in eight bytes and so the table is 768 bytes long.

The address of the beginning of the table is 256 more than the value held in the *Char$* system variable which is located at 23606 and 23607. Bearing in mind that the code of the first character in the table is 32 it can be seen that the address of the first of the eight bytes defining a given character is:

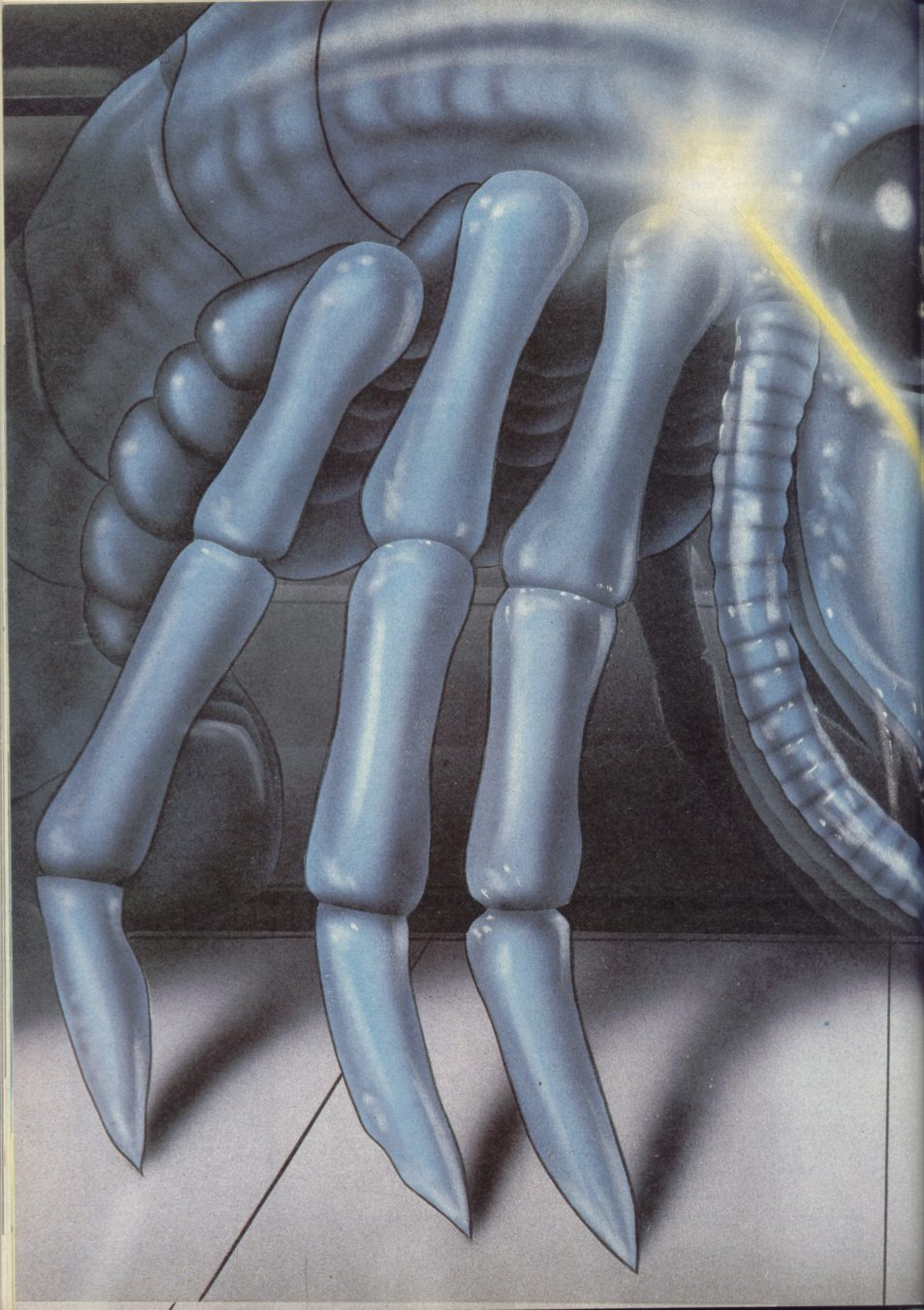
Peek 23606 + 256✱Peek 23607 + 8✱character code

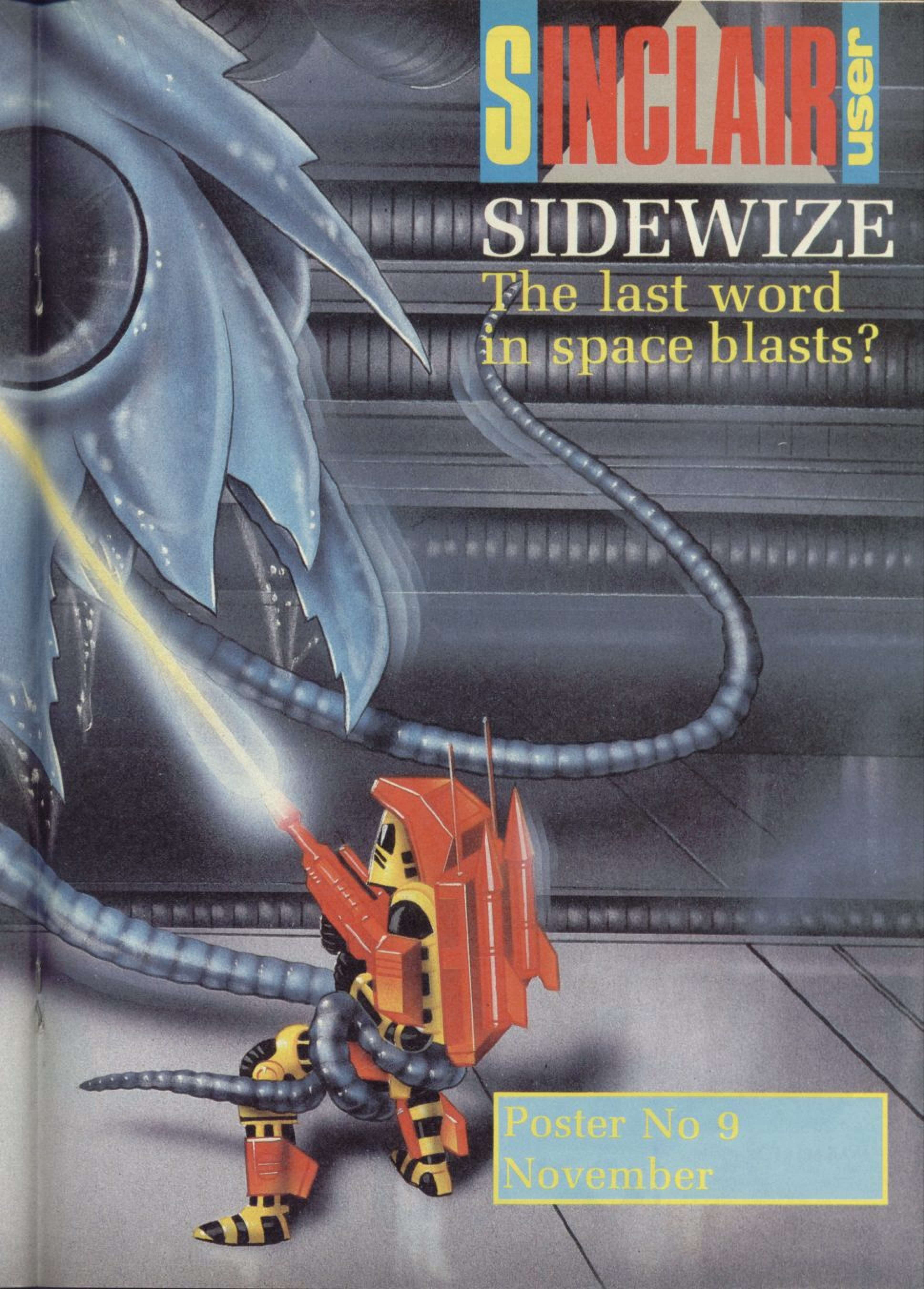
Creating a new character set from scratch is a complicated task because the shape of each letter or digit must be worked out in detail. The best technique is probably to move Ramtop down by 768 bytes, copy the entire Sinclair character table into the area above Ramtop and then reset *Char$* to point to the new area. This is the function of the program in Table Five.

TABLE 5. Program to move the character table above Ramtop and reset the *Char$* system variable to point to the new table

```
10          CLEAR 64599
20          FOR I = 0 TO 767
30          POKE 64600 + I , PEEK (15616 + I)
40          NEXT I
50          POKE 23606 , 88
60          POKE 23607 , 251
```






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BC (Before Clive)

Creation of the world

Dawn of man

Nothing whatsoever (except ad for Z88 promising delivery in 28 days)

Inspector Gadget (Melbourne House)

A cracking one, this. Originally it was going to be put out by Melbourne House – it was reviewed and deemed to be highly awful by many innocently embrolled magazines (SU included). Shortly after the magazines were sent off to the printers Mastertronic bought out Melbourne House and also decided that Le Inspecteur was a load of rubbish, and swiftly axed the entire project. Phew!

Re-Bounder (Gremlin)

Those of you who wanted to play the follow up to Bounder, who hate your friends with a C64 who've been doing it for months, the advice from Gremlin is really don't hold your breath.

It did want to put it out on the Speccy, and it did intend that it should be out ages ago, and it's really like to be able to offer it to us, but thought it'd just see how it did on the C64 first, and well, you get the picture.

Gremlin's in-house programmers are still tinkering with Re-Bounder during their lunch breaks, but they're not going to guarantee anything.

Dawn of the ZX81

Second World War

England wins world cup

Battleships (Elite)

Elite is the first to admit that it got its fingers a tad singed with this one.Intended to be the definitive version of the famous classic pen-and-paper game of the same name (you remember; A6, miss, B7 hit! Bang! etc) Battleships was deemed to be "not good enough" by Elite, despite the fact that it was *incredibly* well received by everyone who saw it and the fact that nearly £70,000 was spent on the project overall. We're saying nothing except to wonder whether anyone else might have a claim to the licence on the game.

Lunch

Mire Mare (Ultimate)

Mire Mare was a name only – the only evidence that a game existed was a tacky advert Ultimate used to place at the end of each of its games along the lines of "well done don't forget to buy the next game in our range: Mire Mare". Well, yes, we certainly would like to sample it and actually have been wanting to for around two years now. We're optimistic though, despite the fact that beyond the comment that "it was supposed to be a Sabreman sort of thing" Centresoft which now markets the Ultimate stuff has "no plans to release anything from Ultimate at the moment. There's nothing in the pipeline."

Wednesday

Margaret Thatcher elected

Attack of the Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens from Mars (Software Projects)

Billed as the sequel to Jet Set Willy, Chickens was to be the next game from the "brilliant" mind of Matthew Smith. Unlike Star Trek, Chickens actually got to the stage of being advertised, which made it all the more teasing when Smith decided that it wasn't good enough and went away to start anew.

Though screenshots were never published, the game – in one of it's embrionic stages, at least – looked surprisingly similar to Road Runner. Still, while many companies annoyingly lie that games are nearly ready, Software Projects has adopted a refreshingly honest approach, and just asked people to forget about it for a while. Quite a long while probably.

Dire Straits' Brothers in Arms enters charts

Star Trek (Firebird)

This one still hasn't come out of hyperspace and now almost everyone has completely lost interest. Originally designed by Mike Singleton, it promised all the thrills of flying the USS Enterprise but even sighting of ST screenshots ages ago didn't come to any kind of actual game. Claims that an ST version may become available "before November" have been dismissed as "Klingon disinformation."

Work started on Channel Tunnel

Invention of television

First Spectrums delivered

Cyborg (CRL)

CRL announced Cyborg well over a year ago, and what with all the hype surrounding the Commodore version – the fact that it featured the first black games hero and incorporated all manner of splendid graphics techniques – everyone became frightfully interested when the Spectrum conversion was promised. A team of programmers called Centaur were hired for the job long before the C64 version was ever completed. No-one knows quite what happened to them, except for the fact that they didn't finish the Amstrad one either.

Last Ninja (System 3)

Ninja's not quite as ancient as some of the other games featured here, but it deserves a mention simply because of its, "Ooh, it's nearly ready" - ness.

The words Last Ninja were first bandied about the place approximately six months ago, and ever since then we've been waiting eagerly for news of the little tinker. Sources at Activision – System 3's parent label – revealed that the main problem was with getting, "the little man to run about at a constant speed. He either went too fast or two slow. But he's all right now." Some blame delays on the fact that half the company went off on a freebie to Bangkok and didn't return.

Programmer Phil Churchyard has promised that the thing's now nearly finished. On the evidence the preview this issue it's still got some way to go...

Madonna single fails to get to No 1

Punk

AD (Amstrad's Demise)

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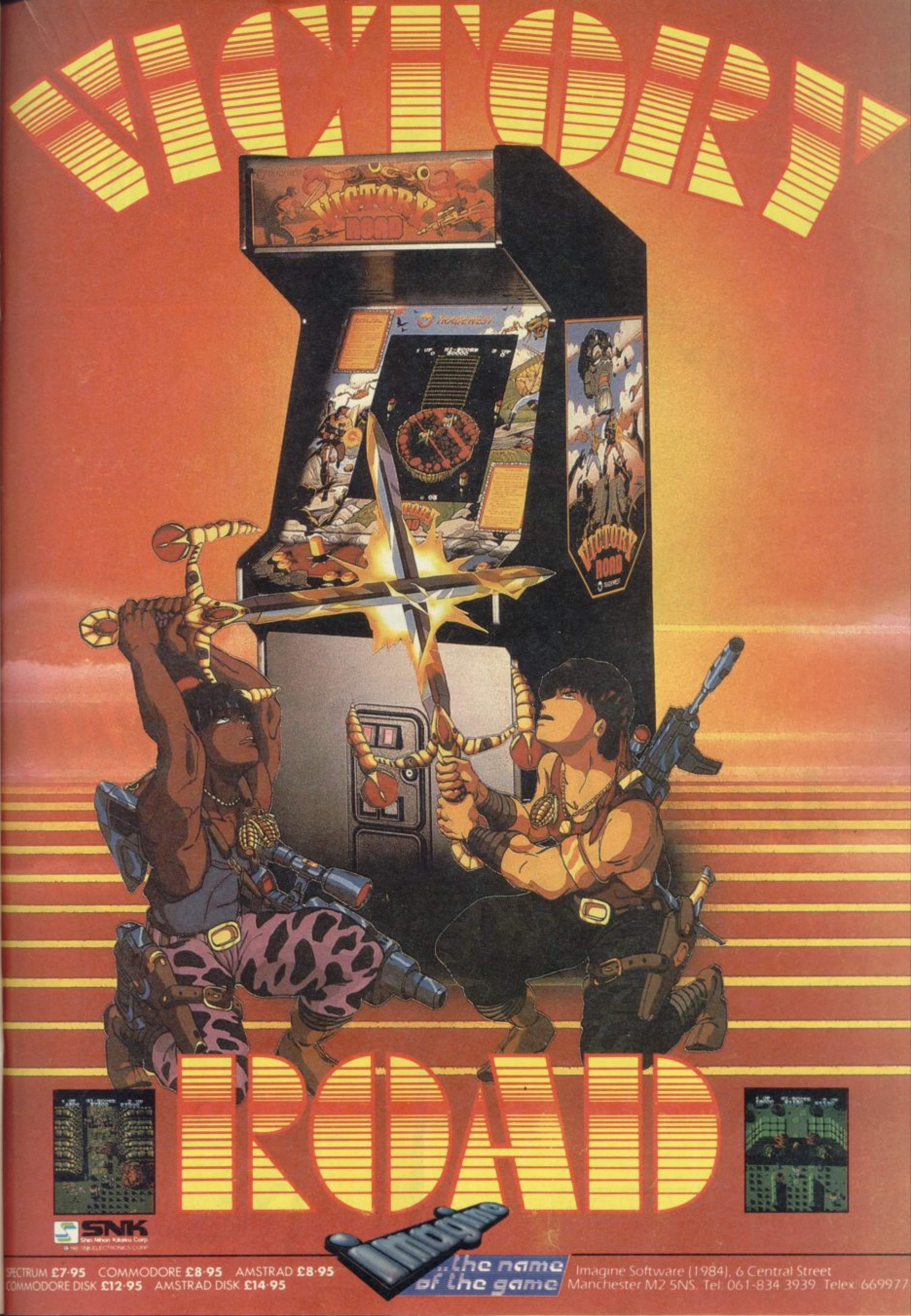
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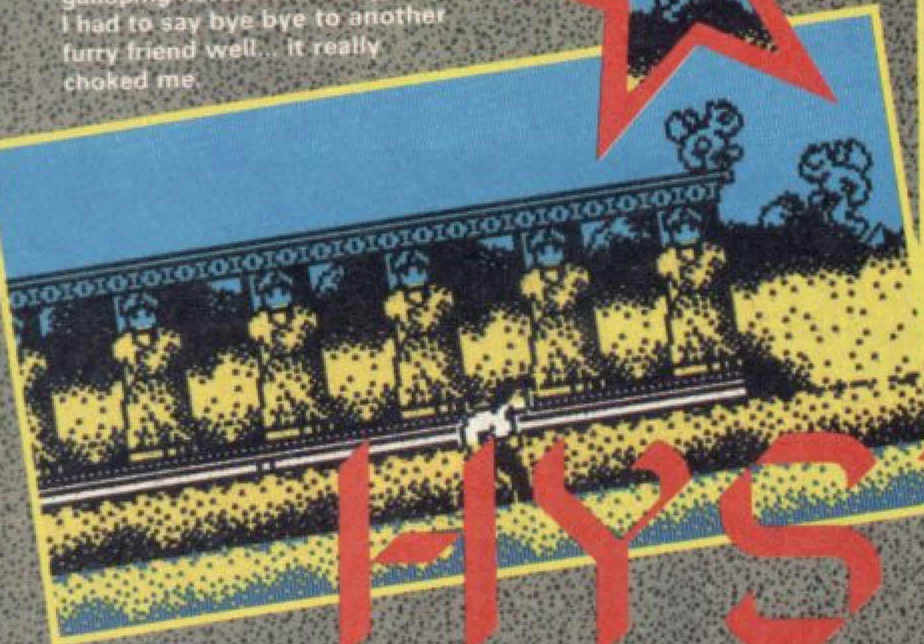
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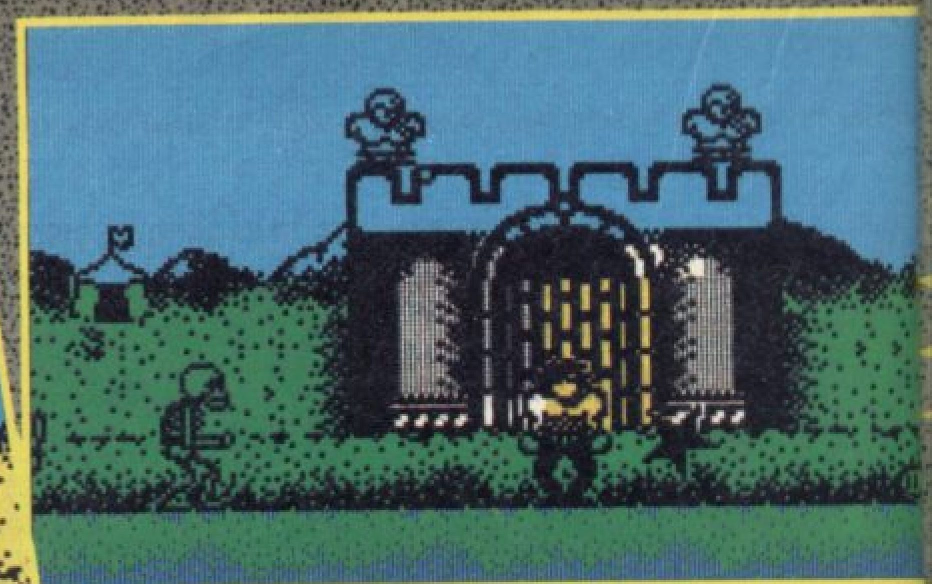

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It's killing the flying squirrels that bothers me most.

I can go for taking out the nasty skeleton things and I got a little bit used to blasting the galloping horses but every time I had to say bye bye to another furry friend well... it really choked me.







HYSTERIA

Hysteria is the name of the game.

This is yet another in the continuing series of games-where-you-build-up-your-fire-power-by-collecting-and-kill-ing-things called GWYBUYFBCAKT'S (for short). In Hysteria you move a sprite – one so butch it was mistaken for a naked woman by at least one impressionable SU staffer – over assorted mythical landscapes. One mythical landscape per level. The first is Ancient Greece-ish, the next is sort of Medieval and the rest are um... different from that I expect. (Only joking, naturally I played through and completed the entire game*).

Some odd adversaries on this one. As already indicated there are flying squirrels, horses, skeletons – and you kill them all. This is a bit odd. More odd is the way sometimes squirrel statues seem to turn into lemons or bits of jigsaw puzzle. The idea behind this phenomenon is that each level has its head honcho baddie, a mega-bad guy much more dangerous than the rest. Being more dangerous s/he/it is an absolutely gigantic sprite that takes one hell of a lot of killing. You first have to kind of "call up" the baddie by building up his face in a window in the top of the screen – this is where those bits of jigsaw puzzle come in. As you grab each bit so the complete face is formed.

Having got the baddie to appear in the guise of a sort of bouncing two-headed slug (very threatening) you have to kill him. This means firepower-a-gogo, and using your defensive shields a lot. As you score hits so the face



FACTS BOX

Not that original but visually excellent. Very fast and just difficult enough to keep you involved – it's a winner

HYSTERIA
Label: Software Projects
Author: Special FX
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★☆ **9**



disappears but then as its gets blasted, so does yours (in another window) so that's fair isn't it? If by any slim chance you manage to completely destroy the slug then it's on to Level 2.

Level 2 is more of the same though it also features some hilarious knights that zoom across the landscape as though on fast forward. Pretty neat. The bad guy on this level looks curiously like a Greek Travel agent I once knew who sold dodgey tickets but I expect it's a coincidence.



The range of fire power you can collect is pretty impressive. You begin with humble lightning bolts, but can graduate to long black lines and orbiting frizbies. If you do really well you an even get a backpack affair and take to the air.

ARCADE REVIEW

Though it's easy to sneer about the plot – it's more or less the same as Sidewize and countless other games – Hysteria is actually excellent. It's really fast, graduates in difficulty at just about the right rate and looks excellent. There are options to play the game in straight black and white or in colour – the colour option does not mean attribute craziness, it looks fine – there's even a sort of half attempt at relative scrolling, which works OK.

Graphic design is excellent, stylish and individual and there are signs that real effort has gone into this one – check out the ultra-sophisticated High Score table for example. So minus one for being similar plotwise to a number of other games around at the moment, but otherwise, wonderful, wonderful, wonderful■

*Read the standard Gremlin – 'some o this may not be completely true' here

PROGRAMMERS

SPECIAL FX is a new programming house set up by a number of well known programmers. Working in **Hysteria** were Jonathan Smith and Karen Davies.

KAREN DAVIES did the graphics work on **Hysteria**.

SOFTOGRAPHY: Graphics for **Frankie Goes to Hollywood** (*Ocean*, 1986), graphics for **Enigma Force** (*Beyond*, 1985)

JONATHAN SMITH did the coding.

SOFTOGRAPHY: **Kong Strikes Back** (*Ocean*, 1985) **Hyper-Sports** (*Ocean*, 1986) **Green Beret** (*Ocean*, 1986) **Cobra** (*Ocean*, 1987)



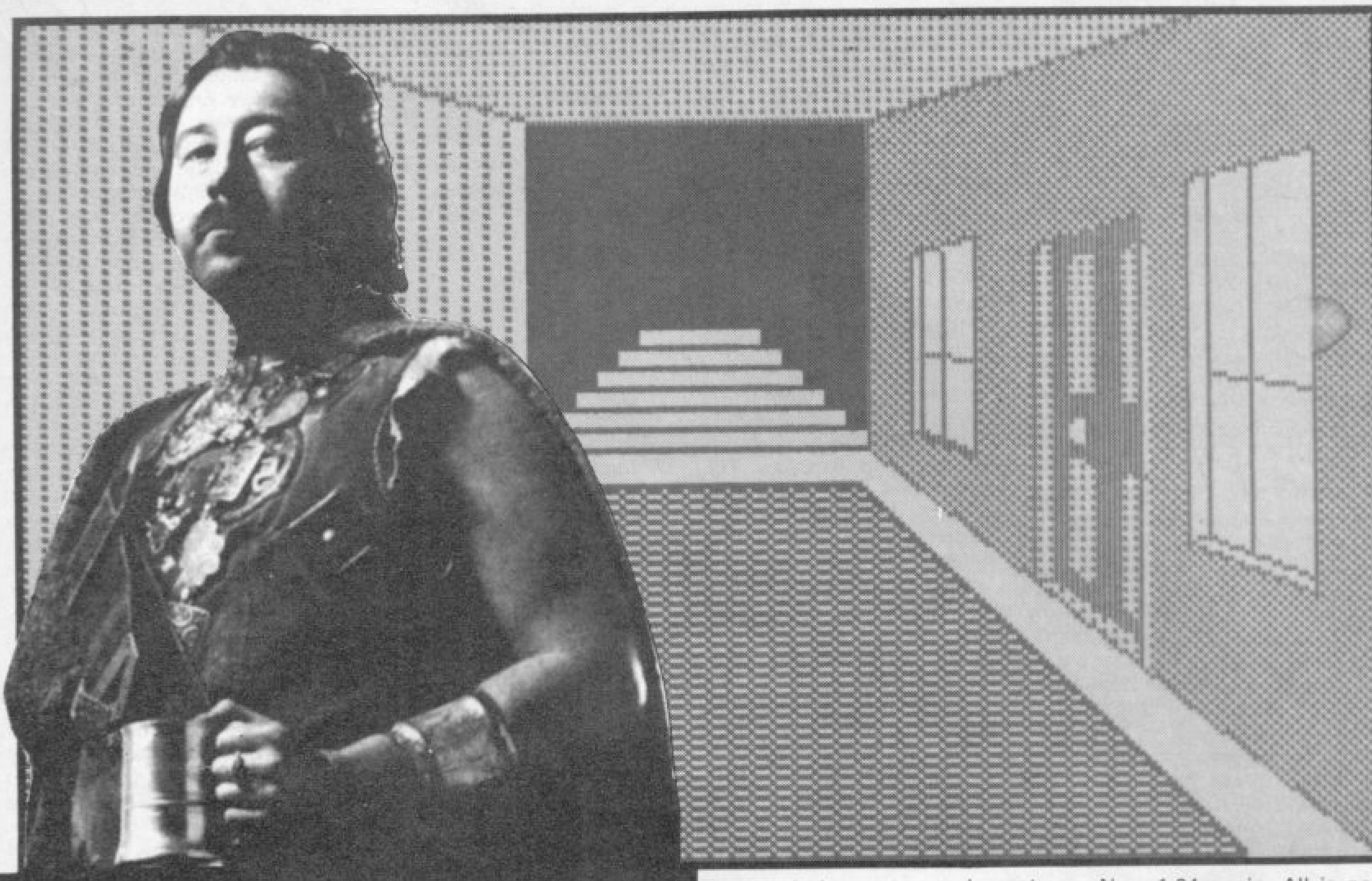
You'll know soon enough!
Rampage, coming to your home computer screen, December.

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GORDO'S HELPLINE

Polls and awards for top software usually reflect the interests of the vast majority of games players – the arcade freaks. This means that adventurers rarely get to see what's rated in their own specialised field. The Adventurers Club is, pretty naturally, an exception to this rule and run its own annual poll.

Nearly a thousand of the club's members voted in the Golden Chalice Awards for '86. Top of the bill came Level 9's The Price of Magik **whilst** Kayleth **pulled in the Silver Chalice. The bronze went to St Bride's CRL production** The Very Big Cave Adventure. **Runners-up, with honourable mention, were** The Pawn, The Boggit **and** Rebel Planet.

No rubbish here – all the games are either complex and demanding or, in The Boggit's case, vastly entertaining. What surprises me is not the result but the sheer number of players who're willing to express their opinions – and this is only in one club. So remember, you're not alone and, going by the awards, you're also a pretty discriminating bunch.

In the time warps of

The Secret of St Brides

Mike Pulpher of Croydon and a certain 'Confused. Hants." are stranded on an island after rescuing an old lady's cat. Try as they may neither of them seems to be able to get back on board their boat. Now, the cat is stuck up a tree and to get it you've got to munch the 'grow' side of your magic mushroom, then use the catmint to attract the feline. Put it in the basket. To board the boat again you've got to return to normal size, so eat the 'shrink' side of the mushroom. You can then go back to the old lady and hand over the cat. Hopefully you'll have been wise enough to keep the catbasket from the trunk room at the very beginning.

Kevin Macnamara of East Croydon has his way blocked by a Fir Bolg – which reminds me to send greetings to that wonder of the comic world, me old mate Slaine the Barbarian, ace Bolg-batterer. Right, sorry, back to the point, which is that the Fir Bolg will be mightily amused if you 10,18 and then rub it out. You can then pass freely.

Now to the excellent Level 9 offering

Worm in Paradise

and a series of questions from Jon Halvorsen of Bergen Norway. "First how do you get to the different places via the Eden Transport System. Second I can't take the helmet with me from the museum without being arrested and third how do you get employed?"

As usual with Level 9 none of the answers are straightforward. Let's look at the helmet problem first. This is a tricksy bit of nicking because before you can get both helmet and leotard you'll have to have acquired a Dagget. Note that Dagget prices go down day by day.

Go to the museum with your faithful electronic plaything. Join the tourists and wait for them to leave. Quickly remove the batpak from the dagget and then take the helmet and the leotard. You need them both to make a complete suit. Come on, hurry up, you've got to hide your loot fast! Put the helmet in the dagget. 5,24 and wear the leotard. Now 1,24 again. All is now safely gathered in and you can make an escape. Wanna job? There are three main ways to turn an honest(ish) penny. You can first of all risk gambling on the Bandit, hardly a predictable kind of income. You can also sell off your spare organs to the hospital. This is not to be recommended very highly as you've only got a limited supply of useful spare innards.

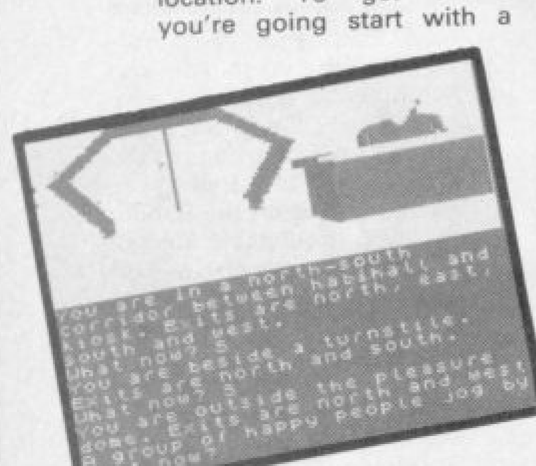
If you really want to work go to the Jobs Warehouse. You can find its location by watching the ads on the telly. Once there just say 'yes' to the Jobcentre Droid's offer, though I would avoid the YOP or YTS schemes. If you've learned how to become a member of the secret society you'll be offered a pretty good job as manager or similar. Make sure you take your jobcard to the work location fairly soon. Travel? Phew, this is a rather extensive little topic. On the easy side you can simply walk the pedways or, when you're in the open, you can call up a robot sedan chair by just saying 'Home'. The ET System is another matter and, frankly, is hellishly complicated at first glance, and second, and third. An ET system is a large disc with thirteen rings set on a central hub. Going north takes you towards the hub, south towards the rim. West and east move you clockwise and anticlockwise around the disc.



GORDO'S HELPLINE

The colour codes show you where you are, with each colour corresponding to a number. These are black (0), through brown (1), red (2), orange (3), yellow (4), green (5), blue (6), violet (7), grey (8) and white (9). The first colour shows what ET system you're on – there are three, all reached from the northernmost roundabout.

So a different set of colours makes up a numerical location. To get where you're going start with a



jump to the centre, then east or west until you pass your destination code, going out progressively to each ring as you need to. To get off the rings just say 'exit' and go south to leave the system. I'm sorry, but this is a very brief and incomplete explanation. If you get really desperate I suggest you send your SAE to Level 9 and plead for help. They've even made a special computer program to make it easier – could it just be a gigantic red herring?

Also this month I've received a letter from Wonko the Sane (Non-Celt) of Knaresborough on the topic of

Snowball

"Did you know that if you type 'Sesame' in **Snowball** you'll find youself in a padded cell? You can escape from here by typing 'Pull machine' twice. This works from anywhere in the game and can be useful if you are about to be caught by a Nightingale or are just floating aimlessly in space. Good, huh?

Can you also point out to anyone owning the **Silicon Dreams** package that the so-called text only 128K version on the reverse side of each cassette will actually run on the basic 48K Specs. Now, my problem is I'm unable to pass the waldroid at the base of Jacob's Ladder. Help! Can you also tell me how to light the lamp?"

I can, Wonko, I can, even for a self confessed non-Celt). The lamp needs a power source to function. Try putting the Batpak into it – you'll find this is the video viewer on the table in the library. The trouble with the Ladder droid is that it's invincible in a straight fight but, if you 7,11 when it's got the aerosol in it, the exploding paint will blind the machine. The aerosol is in a storeroom in the accommodation area south of the Habidome airlock. If you don't store it in the 11 and enter a vacuum – bang, no aerosol.

"I'm kind of stuck" in

Eye of Bain

says Sonia de Freitas of Bournemouth. "First, where's the blade? What do I do with the thing down the well and how do I go into the desert tent without being killed by the nomad? Oh, before I forget, is there any way to get rid of the chain around my leg?"

Removing the chain is no problem. Near the hut at the beginning is a rock, so get it and 17,4. Dispose of the nomad by going into the tent and 6,15. After you've done this be sure to examine the girl and get the ruby and the scimitar. The ruby is the key to shifting the thing down the well – examine it for further information. If you have it on you and 8,19 in the well you'll be able to go further into the hole. Finally the blade can be found in the coffin after you've rubbed out the vampire.

I've also had a few queries on how to get the fire on the hill lit. Despite rummaging through my mail piles I can't find the enquirer's name but the answer anyway is 9,20.

Now, as promised, the second part of the solution to

Spy Trek

as produced by Ryan Redman of Gwent. Last time we'd floated up in a balloon from the Eiffel Tower.

"You now arrive in Switzerland. Go up and get the spade. Enter the car and pull the lever. When it stops go east and dig. Get the rod and hook your umbrella on the cable. This allows you to slide down the cable. Cast your line, get the resulting fish, go west and give the fish to the cat. Now get the skies and head east, south and up before entering the car. Pull the lever again. Go east twice, drop the skies and enter the coach, which will take you to Venice.

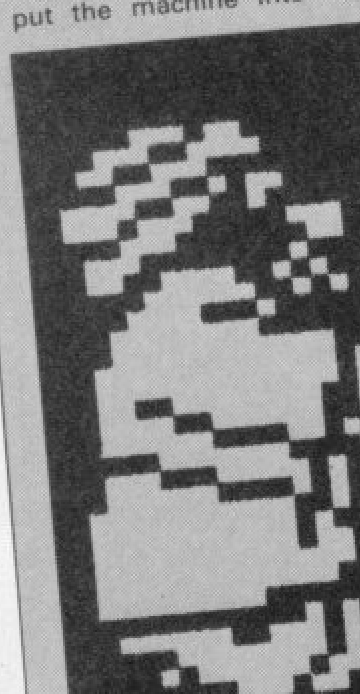
"In Venice go east twice and examine the table. Get the tablecloth, go west and ask the woman to make a habit for you. Get it and wear it. Head west then up twice and go through the gate. West again to get the chopper. Back east, chop the goalposts and get the pole. Go S, Dx2, S and enter the gondola. Move east twice now and get the doll. Turn the stone and enter the passage. Give the doll to the girl you then meet and get the bible and candle. Finally, enter the passage, go west and pull the brick. Behind it you'll find the secret plans that you've been searching for. **Spy Trek** is complete."

The Quickies

QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL: Sarah Lynch of Bury can't seem to find the round table in Camelot. Is there one? I didn't know you actually needed to find it. None of the solutions I have mention one. Let me know if you find one.

TEMPLE OF TERROR: S Tatum of Cheshunt wants to know how to kill the giant sandworm. 6,12 at it. To find it look in the cave with a torch lit at the burning house.

SCEPTRE OF BAGHDAD: An infinite lives cheat from Ian O'Connor and Karl Fudge (appropriate). This will only work on the 128. First of all put the machine into 128 Basic and merge the header. Take out the two poke statements, then run it. You should find you have everlasting life when the game's loaded.



Before you go anywhere near them pay a call on the butcher and buy some juicy steaks. The dogs will take the meat from you as you pass and won't harm you.

HAMPSTEAD & TERRORMOLINOS: A person "who bain't not good at adventures," location unknown, asks where to find the tickets in **Terrormolinos**, how to get the tie in **Hampstead** and also where's the lathe. Oh yeah, and what's the way round the industrial maze? For the tickets 3,23. All the other questions are tied in with each other. To get the tie you need the lathe retaining bracket which is in the maze. After taking the giro, get and ride the bike then N, E, Nx2, Ex2, NE, Ex2, NE, N. Get the bracket and escape SW, S, E OK?

KAYLETH: The same Richard Hughes, Taunton – many thanks for the **Voodoo Castle** solution, which I'll use – asks how to get the corona coat. 6,21 at the rock gullet. You can use the coat to enter the mine but remember to Insert Masta first.

KENTILLA: When Neil Cooper played this before "there was a passage heading east from the furnace room to the chest location. I've done it before but I can't find it now. What's wrong. Also how do I exit Tylon's castle?" The gold ring reveals passages – so wear it! To exit find the steel door further on from the chest room, go W and examine the statue. No 22,14 and head east to the metallic alcove. There's a teleport device here and you can set the dial to any location number between 1 and 35. Select your number and then 25,16.

MATT LUCAS: Steven Wheal, Swindon. "How do you get past the dogs on the pier?" Meat, mate, is the answer, a spot of cupboard love for the nasty Alsatians.

ZZZZ: Jamie Robinson, Richard Hughes and Valerie Pickford all either want to know how to start the orchestra or else what to do afterwards. When in the pit 2,13 and then climb the rope – snake in basket etc. Now head for the border and drop the hat at the border post. Once again 2,13. When the guard starts to dance you can cross the border of sleep and wakefulness. End of game, start all over again for a good yawn.

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GORDO'S HELPLINE

GREATBELLY'S THINGY
1: WEAR 2: RAISE 3: READ 4: CHAIN 5: REMOVE 6: THROW 7: OPEN 8: SAY 9: LIGHT 10: WRITE ON 11: TOOLBOX 12: ROCK 13: BATON 14: ARMS 15: DAGGER 16: BUTTON 17: BREAK 18: PAPER 19: FIRE 20: WOOD 21: PHYSEM 22: MOVE 23: BROCHURES 24: TRADCLADS 25: PUSH.

The Pawn

The last part of Darrin Millin's solution:

"Open the bottle and give it to Jerry Lee Lewis. Go S, E, N, E. You are now in hell so examine the throne and ask the devil about the wristband. You will now be transported to the rope bridge. Take the potion bottle and go Nx2, NE, N. Take white and rope and drop rope. Sx2, NW. Point to the shadows and then shine white at them. N and then throw the bottle at Kronos. Push the aerosol button several times and you'll find that Kronos is dead.

"Get the cloak, pointy hat and wand and wear the first two. Now Sx2, E, NE, N. Take the rope and drop the white. Climb the rope, drop it and go S, E, D, E, N, E. Give the aerosol to the devil, ask the devil about the wristband and you'll be transported out of hell. Nx2, NE, N. Take the white and then Sx5, E, SE, Sx2, E – drop all. E, U, break the wall and take all there. E, N, push the pedestal and take the key, N. To leave the maze type 'exit maze' and then S, Wx2, S.

"Open the door, S, then knock on the door. When asked if you have a wristband answer No. Go south and you'll be given a program listing. Type Debug Listing. Nx3, U, Wx3, S, D, Sx5, Wx2, U, E, Dx2, E and N. Take the rug, drop it. Unlock the safe using S, E. Put the ballot paper into the large box. There is no final screen and, as far as I know, this solution will work on all versions. Full score is 350/350."

That's it so, till next moon...

GORDO GREATBELLY, Landlord.

Information Exchange

Not a lot this moon as I suspect that lots of you have been living it up in Clacton, Marbella or Ibiza over the summer hols. Letting the side down, eh? Why aren't you ruining your eyesight and brain cells by spending most of those balmy summer nights in front of your monitors? Anyway...

● S Brown of 29 Lodore Road, Bradford, W Yorks BD2 4HY is prepared to sell all three solutions for **'Fourth Protocol'** at the bargain price of 15p per section plus SAE. He's also interested in swapping games with other players.

● M V Pitson of 4 Pemble Close, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6TP says he and his kids are getting very frustrated in both **'Zorro'** and **'Se-kaa of Assiah'**. Would someone please send him either the full solutions or at least some comprehensive hints and tips. Be nice folks.

● Anyone yet found the solution to **'Blizzard Pass'**? I'll serialise it if you send it in. We're getting a lot of queries and I haven't yet even got hold of the tape.



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Hang ten!



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Easy. Just answer the questions below, fill in the coupon and send it to: Garny Liptricks In The Pipe Compo, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough P62 OUF

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2) What are the wheels on a skateboard called?

3) Which company manufactures the **720°** arcade machine?

The Coupon

1) ....

2) ....

3) ....

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

....

No one from USG or SU may enter, or it'll be concrete hanky time down the half-pipe.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL

SIMULATION Label: **Gamestar** Author: **Simon Freeman** Price: **£7.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Graham Taylor**

A simulation of American Basketball with two players a side! Thoroughly implemented but looks appalling

Championship Basketball is a release from Activision's Gamestar label – a follow-on from Championship Baseball, two months ago.

Frankly, the game looks completely aweful. Some of the least impressive miniscule sub-budget game sprites I've seen in ages run around like little ants, atribute probleming each other into oblivion when the going gets tough and four people are around the basket at once. Try playing a sensible defence routine under those circumstances!

Sound is equally dull consisting almost entirely of obscure farping (that's farping) noises, no matter what the game circumstances.

It's the gameplay that's the tricky bit. I managed to score the same number of points as the computer without having a clue what I was doing.

There are, however, facilities within the game for quite subtle plays. Aside from the straightforward business of chasing the ball, learning how to get it away from another player without committing a foul, and lining yourself up with the basket properly at the beginning of each play you can select from four plays each depending on whether you are defending or attacking.

Each play type is basically a series of instructions to the other member of your team and determines his movement in the play for the basket. For example, one attacking move is to send your team-mate straight to the basket, ready for a pass at the right moment. Other alternatives include marking one or other of the other side's team members. It seems sophisiticated but I'm really unsure of how much it all counts for in the actual game. I found just running around a bit and throwing the ball when I got a spare moment into the general direction of either my team-mate or the basket just as effective.

Personally I hated this game. It might be argueable as to whether the gameplay is marvellous or terrible but it looks absolutely dire■

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **3**

ENDURO

ARCADE Label: **Firebird** Author: **Activision** Price: **£1.99** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

More boring old Activision re-releases. Poor graphics, poor scrolling and no playability. Forget it

Pressing on regardless, releasing all the old Acivision stuff on budget, and after failing with River Raid, Firebird is still trying to do the impossible. To do a decent Atari 2600 conversion. It carrys on the trend with that old rad-racing classic, Enduro. In it you must ride a cross-country course over land and snow, occasionally riding through the night. You race against hundreds of other cars beautifully drawn in glorious block-o-vision. (Except in the night where they are portrayed by their headlights only.)

The road is two lines on either side and the only impression of movement is an occasional wave in the line that passes at regular intervals. Another pathetic effort by Firebird. Let sleeping games lie, that's what I reckon■

★★☆☆☆
★☆☆☆☆ **3**

EDDIE KIDD JUMP CHALLENGE

SIMULATION Label: **Ricochet** Author: **Martech/Ian McCardle** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Budget-priced re-release of a game without much merit. Briefly entertaining

Have I gone all twizzley or something? I was sure that this was a Martech game a couple of years ago. Oh, I see, it was. Now out on Ricochet (coming back etc – geddit). Anyway if you like the sort of things that EK gets up to on his electroglide or whatever, you'll probably go for this. Graphically it's fairly dire, involving a stick man on a bike (BMX push-bike to start, then moving on to a motorcycle) zooming along a white dotted line before shooting up a ramp and over some barrels. Easy controls coupled with an incredibly low skill requirement make Jump Challenge an affordable way to waste an hour or so■

★★★☆☆
★★☆☆☆ **5**

TWILIGHT ZONE

TEN PIN CHALLENGE

SIMULATION Label: **Atlantis** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **keyboard only** Reviewer: **Jerry Muir**

Primitive bowling simulation which has little to offer to any but the most hard-core fans of the sport

The world of strikes, spares and frames comes to the Spectrum. Scoring in ten-pin bowling seems unnecessarily complex – but perhaps that's to make up for the simplicity of rolling the ball and knocking over the pins. Sophisticated stuff, huh?

This game, which can be played by up to four people, takes care of the arcane scoring, so that you can concentrate on toppling those skittles. Problem is that it returns sports simulations to the bad old days of positioning a cursor then trying to stop a spinning pointer just where you want it.

You have to take aim, set the spin then press the trigger for the required amount of time to launch the ball. Shots are interspersed with a tedious pin-replacing routine. Admittedly it's quite tricky, but what does it have to do with the physical act of hurling bowling balls around?

If you're an addict of the sport it might hold some little appeal, providing you've got friends to play against, but there are enough rough edges to make anyone else strike their Spectrum in frustration!■

★★☆☆☆
★★☆☆☆ **4**

NICK FALDO PLAYS THE OPEN

SIMULATION Label: **Bug Byte** Author: **in-house** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Graham Taylor**

Excellent golf simulation, spoilt slightly by no 'close-up' of the flag section. Great value on budget

What would you do if you had a golf game called Nick Faldo Plays The Open and Nick Faldo had just won the open? That's right you'd rerelease it. And that's just what Bug Byte has done putting Nick Faldo Plays The Open out at a budget price. Oportunism, sure, but it so happens that NFPTO is one of the better golf games. It ain't Leaderboard, but it ain't bad either.

The game is played over a 900-screen scrolling map based losely on the Sandwich course. It's this detail plus the nice icon graphic system illustrating golfer and (sometimes abusive) caddie that makes the game. Easy to understand, nice to look at and as difficult as you want.

Criticism? Only one – when it comes to putting there is no close-up of the green around the flag and the scaling therefore makes it at least partly a matter of luck whether you finally hole the ball. Never mind. It was good at £6 or so. At £2.99 it's an absolute steal■

★★★★☆
★★★★☆ **8**

CUSTERD'S QUEST

ADVENTURE Label: **Power House** Author: **Craig Richard Davies** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Reviewer: **Jerry Muir**

Silly adventure that takes sideswipes at some staples of the standard quest. Should raise a smile

The word is whacky. Author Craig Richard Davies has taken a leaf out of the Fergus McNeill book and Quill-ed with his tongue firmly into his cheek, which means that Custerd's Quest is a rich trifle of satirical references to all those cliches that give adventurers such feelings of *deja vu*.

Actually this sort of spoof on the land of trolls, castles and missing keys isn't quite so novel as it used to be, but Custerd avoids getting egg on its face thanks to some fairly full descriptions and a number of witty responses.

None of the puzzles are too difficult, but the humour is suitably silly and should raise the odd smile. There are also occasional illustrations, which are kept simple enough to appear with only the briefest delay.

Custerd isn't likely to win any awards for originality and the inlay fails to credit the Quill or explain how to use the *Ramsave*. But for a budget bash at some well-heeled conventions it offers a few chuckles, even if it is lacking in the belly-laugh department■

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ **6**

BANABABLIP AND SPACEMANBLIP

STRATEGY Label: **Le Lu/Lu's** 27a Draycot Avenue, Layton, Blackpool, Lancs, FY3 7NP Price: **£2.50** Joystick: **none** Memory: **48K/128K** Reviewer: **Tamara Howard**

Perhaps good after a few pints and a curry, but then, aren't most things?

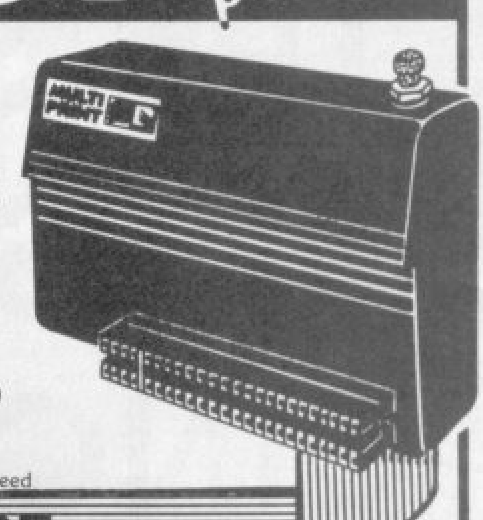
Two of the silliest games ever to be released. Bananablip and Spacemabblip require the player to chose alternatives and stick to them. Bananablip provides you with twenty pictures, and then five alternatives as to what they are. Guess them all right and you'll be a hero, but I don't think that'll happen. Spacemanblip asks you to interpret the spaceman's next move out of a list of half a dozen or so that flash on the screen for about two seconds and then go away again. Impossible unless you cheat.

Both bizarre and baffling and, oh dear, not really very good at all apart from the obvious novelty value and complete bizarreness■

★☆☆☆☆
☆☆☆☆☆ **1**

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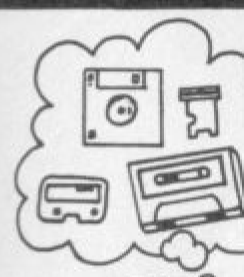
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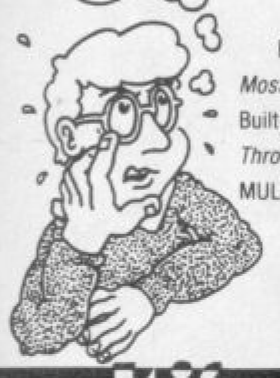
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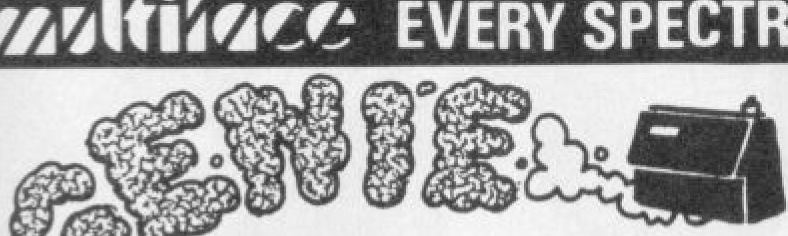
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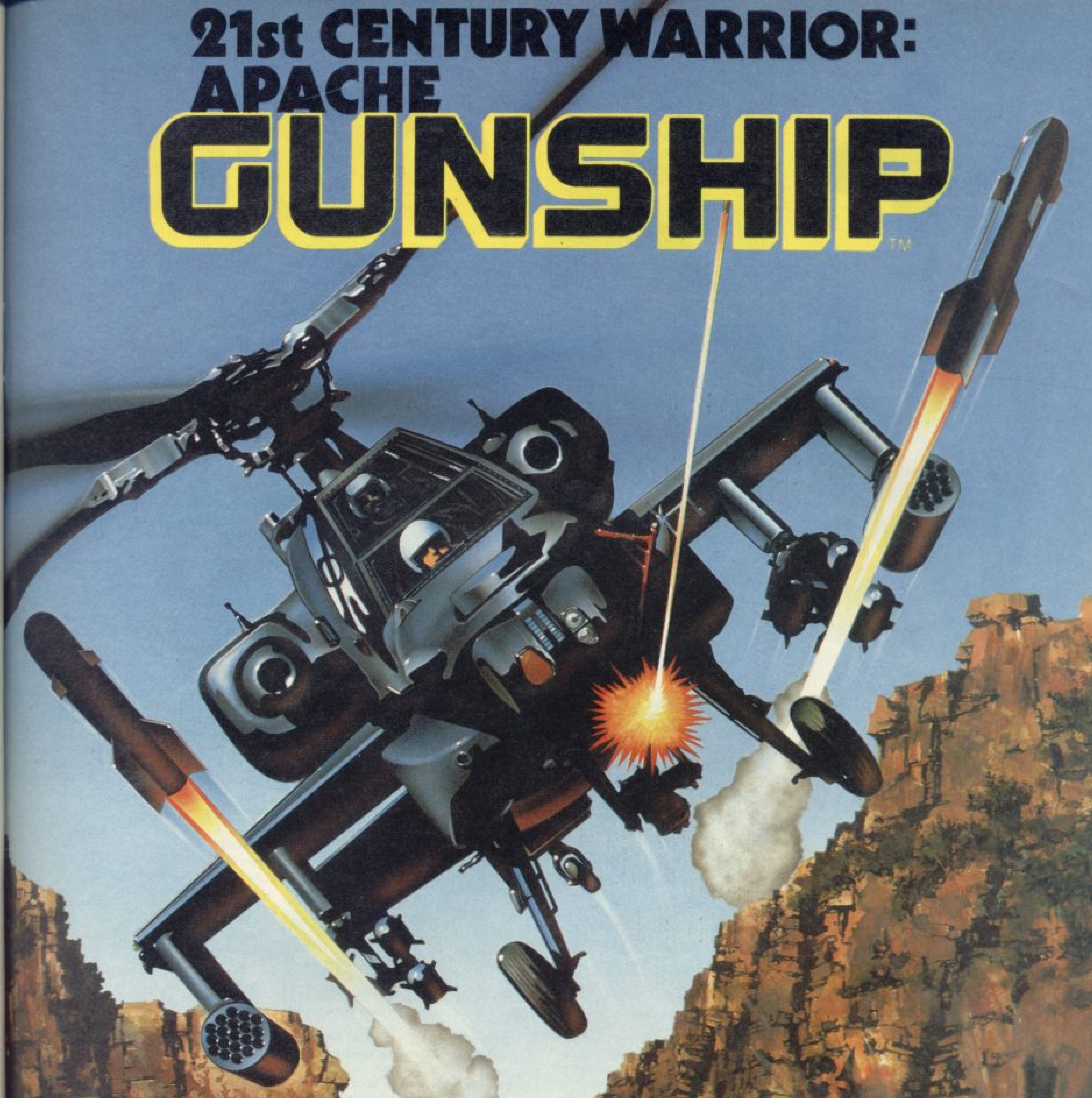
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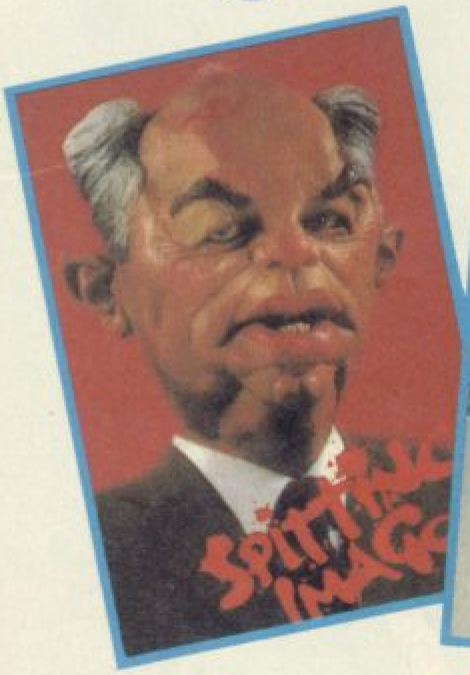
ÖUTL

SPITTING SCANDLES

If something is successful once, you can be sure it will be successful at least twenty five times in various other guises.

So, with Spitting Images, **first TV prog, then pet amusers, then general media personalities, and now a board game.**

Usually games based on TV programs are absolute crud, so the SU editorial team thought we'd better check this one out. The game costs a whopping £18.99 and for that you get board, money, cards and six world leaders as realised in white plastic by the Spitting Image team. You get to play your choice of The Pope, Thatcher **(no-one in SU would volunteer for that one),** Owen, Kinnock, Gorbachev **or** Reagan.







The substance of the game is to try to expose the three scandals of the other world leaders whilst keeping your own safe. This is achieved by shunting a pig figure around the board so that it lands on the same square and... well never mind. The pig is a journalist and somehow the game works without any dice and you just move as many squares as you like up to six... it isn't very easy to explain how this could possibly work but it does and quite well actually.

Much fun is had out of blackmail, corruption and generally lying your way out of trouble, which is after all, a nice change from asking each other lots of meaningless and obscure questions... In fact we enjoyed the whole thing quite a lot.

The game is available now from all those places that usually sell board games...

GRAHAM TAYLOR

COIN-OP OF THE MONTH

A fine mixture of **Gauntlet** and **Alien Syndrome**, Konami's **Devil World** transports you to a land where dragons breath fire and the aliens are still out to kill.

Devil World has two player option, and is much more exciting played that way. To put it in a nutshell — search assorted islands for a key, eat any goodies found en route for strength, pick up extra weapons, shoot the baddies and hotfoot it to the exit which leads to the next island in the group.

Needless to say, it isn't that easy. For one thing, you can guarantee that the key and exit are poles apart and change location each time you play. Your guide is a map which can be accessed at any time and shows your present position in relation to the key and exit.

The aliens are everywhere, in huge numbers, and are generated in small stone cairns — very **Gauntlet**esque — though you can drastically reduce their numbers by knocking out these breeding holes with your laser rifle, (or whatever other weapon you've managed to find). The idea is to kill the monsters before they get too close, as they're dab hands at throwing sharp implements in your direction.

The islands seem to float in a sea of nothingness. One false step and you'll plummet over the edge and tumble to your death. Each island is different, and skill and a steady hand on the controls are vital if you're to negotiate them. For example, one land is a chain of three islands linked by treacherous and often rotten rope ladders. Guiding your character over the bridge with the baddies breathing down your neck and yawning abyss below is enough to make anyone lose their grip. Especially when you step onto plants which suddenly collapse.

Another island is swept by fire, and yet another is a pool of flowing lava through which you have to cross by jumping from plate to plate of laval rock. A dragon also crops up and is perhaps one of the trickiest and hottest customers you'll encounter.

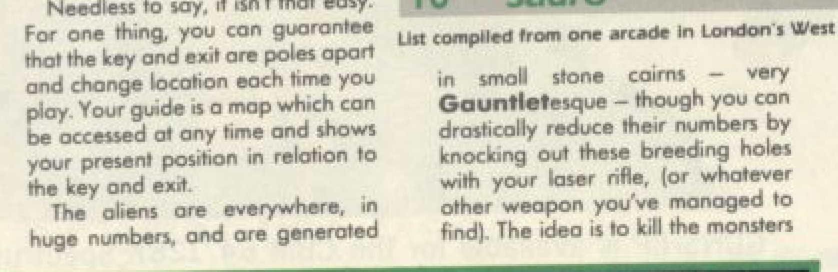
Great fun and an absolute must for all **Gauntlet** officianados.

CLARE EDGELEY

TOP TEN COIN-OPS NOVEMBER

1	Wec Le Mans (upright)	Atari
2	Midnight Landing	Taito
3	R-Type	Irem Corporation
4	Double Dragon	Taito
5	Road Blaster	Atari
6	1943	Capcom
7	Black Tiger	Capcom
8	World Wars	SNK
9	Flying Shark	Taito
10	Sauro	Tecfri

List compiled from one arcade in London's West End. Thanks to John Stergides of Electrocoin





AÑDS



FANGS A LOT

With the continuing popularity of science fiction, fantasy and horror films, a horde of specialist magazines will now keep you up to date on the latest creepies. Consisting of photos, interviews and features on films past, present, and yet to be seen in this part of the world, these are some of the hippest titles to leave lying on your laboratory table...

CINEFAX: lushly-produced, with a good deal of colour, this lavish "journal of film special effects" justifies its £3.50 price-tag with the depth of its coverage. The odd A5 format (fold your SU in half – odd, yes?) adds to the interest. Latest issue features **Little Shoppe of Horrors**, **The Gate**, and **Golden Child**.

FANGORIA:£2.25 yuk test for lovers of "horror in entertainment"; gore-splattered pictures from the latest zombie flicks, stalk'n'splash epics and horror titles. Not for the faint-hearted; latest issue features parasitic aliens from **Hidden**, plus **Friday 13th**, cult director Larry Cohen, and sfx makeup from Ricker Baker.

CINEFANTASTIQUE MAD MOVIES: excellent all-colour look at latest film thrillers including, in the latest issue, Arnold Schwarzenegger's **Predator**. Only problem the text in this £3.95 goodie is entirely in French, so brush up on your conjugations...

STARBURST: venerable UK filmmag, now in decline since its move from Marvel. Still provides a good news service and some worthwhile colour pics, but the reviews and interviews are firmly stuck in amateurland, with a boring emphasis on the Doctor Who/Blake's Seven school of SF. Not bad for £1.35, though.

PREVUE: fairly slick £1.95 American title with the emphasis on forthcoming rather than established fantasy films and TV shows. Also emphasises acres of thigh from starlets like Sybil Danning, Caroline Munro, Maud Adams and Darryl Hannah – ho humm.

FILES MAGAZINES: continuing series on cult shows like **Man from U.N.C.L.E.**, **Batman**, **James Bond**, **Star Trek** and **Get Smart**. Most titles around £4.50; excellent sources of trivia, but the glossy colour covers hid lousy printing and shockingly bad B&W photos inside.



All titles available from branches of Forbidden Planet around the country, plus other specialist bookshops.

CHRIS JENKINS



DREDD FLICK

At last! Everyone's favourite supporter of law and order, **Judge Dredd** is being turned into a movie. Rumoured to be up for the part which – if authentic Dredd custom is maintained – will involve spending the entire movie in his helmet is none other than the **Terminator** himself, **Arnold Schwarzenegger.** Let's hope not. Despite Arnies' indubitable wonderfulness, it has to be said that he just isn't the right man for the part. Since all we're going to see is a chin and a spandex suit, **Clint Eastwood** is obviously the man to go for. Other main-men like **Harrison Ford, Mickey Rourke** and **Robert de Niro** were presumably discounted for, respectively, slight tubbiness, grinning too much and insisting on trying to "live" his role by becoming a real judge and living in his suit all hours of the day.

JIM DOUGLAS

NO CUTIES!



Cuddly toys aren't what they used to be; the latest cuties for the kiddies would chew up your teddy for breakfast and spit out the gristle.

MADBALLS: come in all shapes and sizes, but all of them are revolting. Your basic Madballs are £2.35, and look like horribly mutated tennis balls with exposed brains, staring eyes, drooling mouths and festering sores. Names like Slobulus, Skull Face, Oculus Orbus and Crackhead give you some idea just how disgusting these little horrors are.

SLIMBERBALLS are even pukier – at £3.25, the same characters, but supplied with an unscrewing cap and a bottle of good to pour into them. Just squeeze – and they vomit green slime! YEUGH! The package warns "Slimeballs slime is not a food product" – as if you'd put it in your MOUTH!

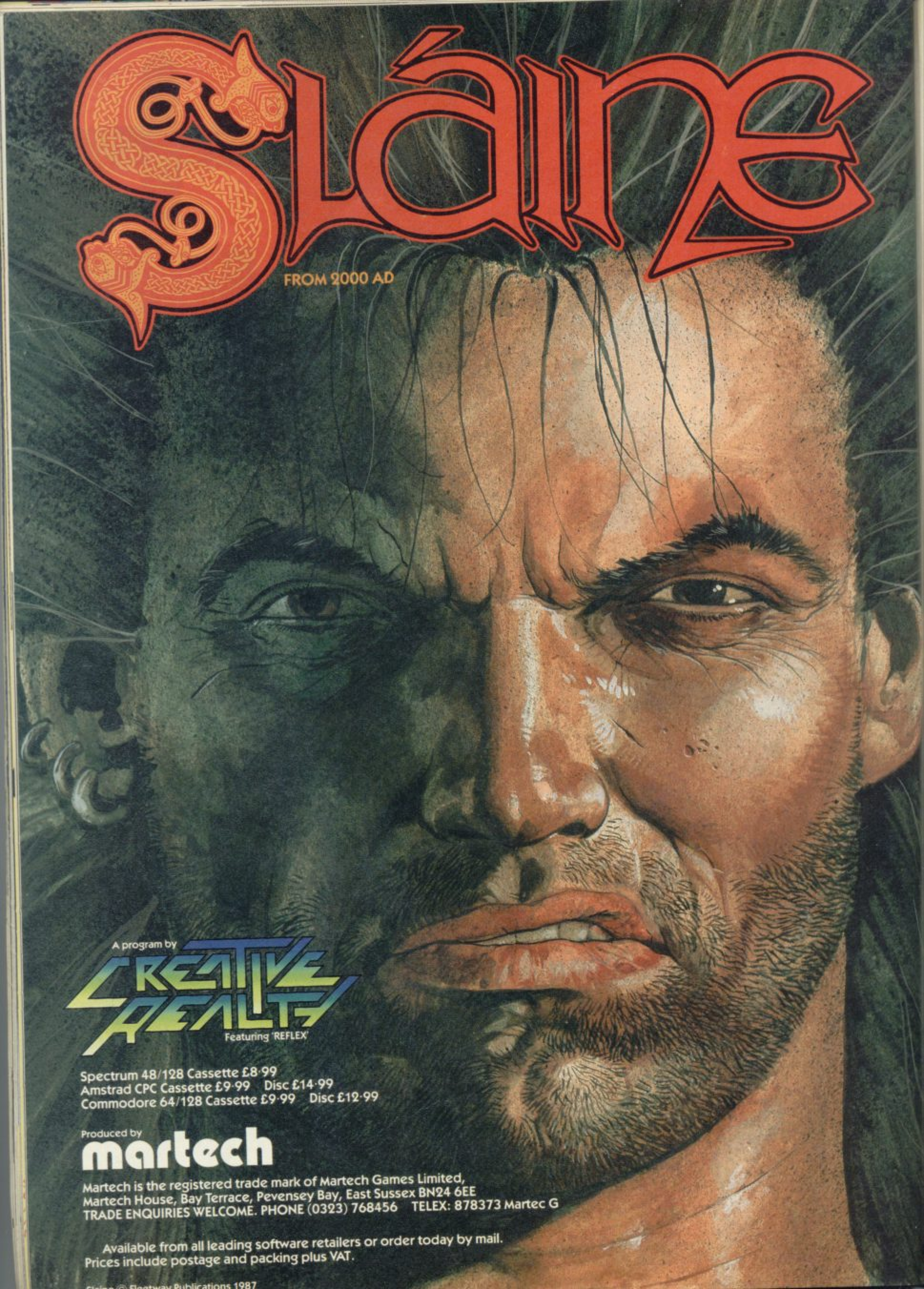
HEADPOPPING MADBALLS: are £3.49 – these ones come with stunted little bodies, but press the hidden button and their heads fly off. Also available at £2.97 are sets of two:

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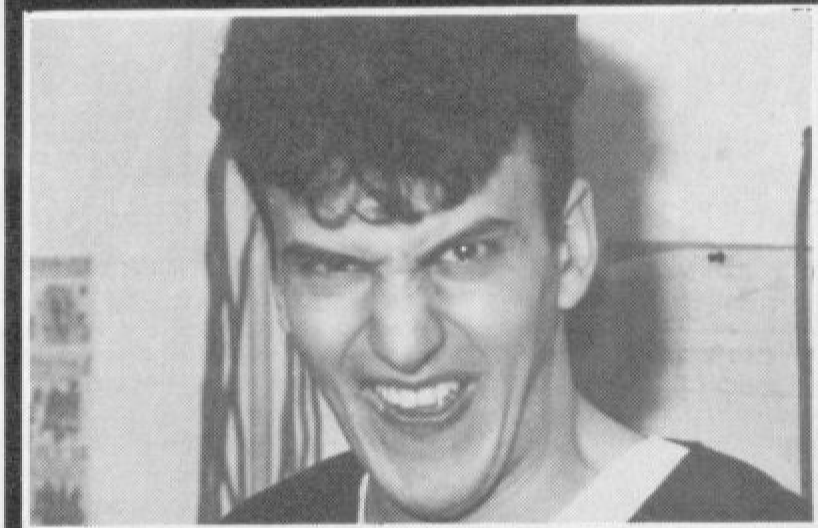
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CHRIS JENKINS


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ELIOT GAY

Despite doing a showjumping game for Alligata, Eliot Gay is well on the way to being almost quite famous. First because of the not too bad Falcon **and now because of the controversial** How to be a Complete Bastard. **He's the only programmer so far interviewed who drinks diet milk and likes the Bee Gees. We felt you'd want to know more. . .**

What did you think when you were asked to do the **Bastard** game?

I thought 'How marvellous to be able to do my own autobiography'

Did Virgin give you any limitations on what you could put in the game?

No excessive violence – there isn't really any and if you hurt people you get arrested. I think the game could have been even better if I could have included more sex and violence

Talking of excessive violence, most programmers like heavy metal. Do you?

Oh no I hate it – it's awful. Actually I prefer the *Pet Shop Boys* and best of all *The Bee Gees*

You must be very pleased about the new album they have out after all these years. . .

Oh yes it's great. My favourite track is Tragedy. It's really advanced for 1979, I even have a pet spide named after it

What's its name?

Brigette Gertrude Tragedy. Its a tarantula and I keep it in the office

Do you have funny teeth like the Bee Gees?

Actually I do have a crocked front tooth – I think nature wanted me to be a Bee Gee.

Is there any music you really hate?

Yes, my bosses' singing

Favourite video?

I only get through one or two a month but my favourites are *Rocky Horror* and *James Bond*. *Rocky Horror* is just brilliant and I actually model myself on *James Bond*.

Does that mean you drive a fab car?

Could we just say it's a bright shiny red Fiat sportcar?

Is it a bit smallish?

Well it is a bit.

What is your worst vice?

I'm very, very lazy. Sometimes I spend all of Saturday and Sunday in bed.

Do you have a TV in your bedroom?

Oh yes, I liked to watch *Brookside* on it and the *Wide Awake Club* if I'm awake.

Any other fave TV programmes?

Well I watch *Dynasty* a bit and I saw the *Colbys* when Fallon was kidnapped by aliens. I like the *Untouchables* because I have the same name as the hero and I like that advert with the dancing raisins.

Does it make you want to eat raisins?

No, not at all.

Do you do any sports

No I'm too lazy.

Worst program ever?

It must be Jack Charlton's Match Fishing **– captured the real boredom of fishing**

Worst food ever?

Cheese. Any sort of cheese – I can't stand it though I like diet milk.

Worst thing about school?

The water fights we used to have at the end of term. I always got soaked

Best thing about school?

Don't know – I didn't used to go much

Why was that?

I'm very lazy

Are you a snappy dresser?

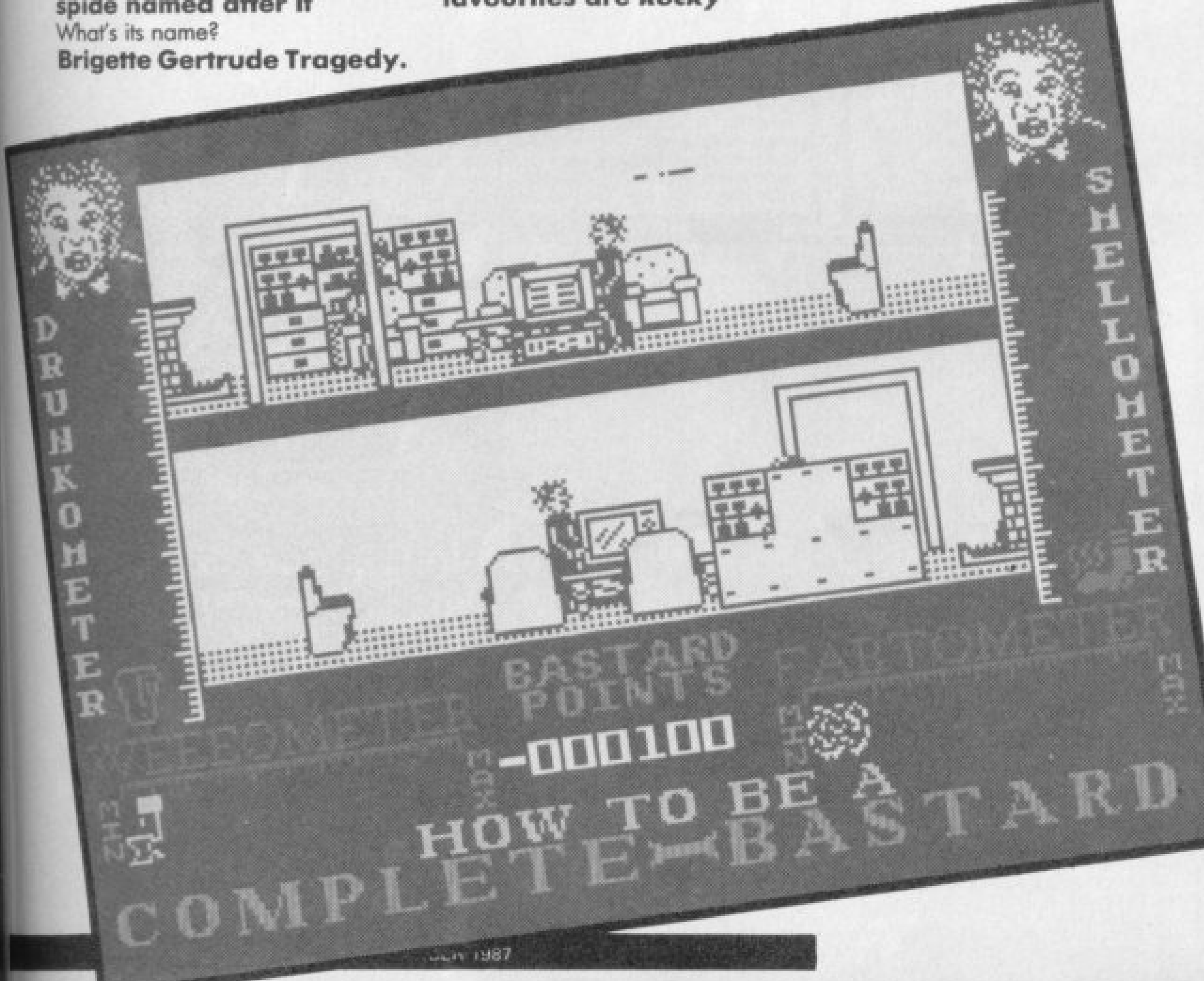
Yes. I always have to outdress everybody around me. For example even though I am wearing jeans at the moment they are not boring old 501s – they are special very uncommon jeans.

Do you like Madonna?

Well she gave a concert here and I didn't go so I probably don't but I hum her tunes a lot

What would be your ideal program?

A game where you could enter your computer, put characters representing all your friends in it and do whatever you wanted with them ■



MUSIC

The Beep goes on-and-on

How to code a pseudo multi-channel sound system

Nowadays every other game you buy has a two-channel soundtrack, and it was this which put me to work on writing my own pseudo multi-channel sound system.

It is fairly obvious that any such system has to be in machine-code, as ZX Basic is very, very slow. There are two ways of doing it: one is to toggle rapidly between the required pitches, sounding each for a fraction of a second. I tried it and it didn't work all that well.

Fundamentally, a sound of a given pitch is a series of pulses with gaps between them and bigger gaps give a lower note. If two (or more) such 'pulse trains' could be maintained at the same time, then multi-channel sound is created. Enter the program in Fig 1 and *Save* it, then *Run* it to hear the idea in action.

To use the generator, you will probably need to rig up some form of amplification. Use the loudest method you know; you will need it! Goto 1000 and a two-tone (concordant) burst should be heard. The first two Pokes after line 1000 tell the program to wait 100 and 67 cycles between each pulse of each pulse train. The next Poke tells the program there are no more channels to process. The next one says how long the note is to be, in multiples of 256 cycles; here it is 50x256, ie 12800 times round the program, (sounding pulses every 100, and 67 times). The next two are counters for each channel, normally they are set to 0, but the tone quality of the note can be altered by Pokeing values other than 0 in. The last one sets the overall pitch of the chord and is best left set to 1.

Anyone who has every tried to get music out of the Commodore will know that good music needs lots of Pokes. In theory, to play the notes again, *Rand Usr* 48896 is typed, but a subtle difference may be heard. A quick Peek at locations 49408 and 49409 will show that they are not zero any more, as they were used as work-space by the generator. Simply Poke them with 0 to return to normal.

If you try Pokeing the first two addresses with numbers other than 100 and 67, different notes will be played, where smaller numbers give higher notes, but avoid very small numbers, as this can make the other channel play at the wrong pitch. One thing you will notice as you play around with the numbers is that it is not easy to obtain the usual musical steps of semitones and octaves. To go up an octave, halve the number you Poke, and double it to go down. Semitones are more tricky. To move up a semitone, multiply the number by 0.944. This seems an odd number, but in fact it is the twelfth root of one half (rounded off somewhat). To go up two semitones, multiply by 0.944 twice, ie 0.944^2, and so on. In general, to obtain the value to Poke from the normal (and familiar) Beep pitch value:

Let (pokevalue)=
100*0.944 ↑ (beepvalue),
and it works with negative values as well.

Unfortunately, the 'power-raising' function (↑) is slow on the Spectrum, and this means that sequences of notes will tend to have annoyingly long calculating gaps. There are various answers to this: the best is to set up an array containing the required numbers, and read that instead; do all the calculation beforehand, putting music data into the array, and reading it at high speed. Gaps are shorter as a result, and I made do with a combination of these techniques for some time, until I wrote the program in Fig 2.

What this (rather lengthy) Basic program does is to produce 'customized' machine code. *You* tell it how many channels you want to have, and *t* writes the machine-code you need for high-speed music. The program reads note data in from a table in memory and gives it to the sound generator with the machine-code equivalent of Peeks and Pokes. It then calls the routine, and checks to see if the space key is being pressed. If so, the program stops.

Suppose you had *Run* the program and replied '2' to the prompt. The machine code would be written, starting at address 49664, and the start of the data table would be set up at 49920. The table to be read must be set up manually, and the various numbers should be Poked in as follows for two-channel mode:

Note 1:	49920	length 1
	49921	pitch A
	49922	pitch B
	49923	counter A
	49924	counter B
Note 2:	49925	length 2
	and so on...	

Two things to note: after the last entry in the table, Poke in a 0 instead of the next (non-existent) note; if instead of a pitch value, the number 255 is Poked into 'pitch A', a rest for the length of the note will be created. In this case, Poke 'pitch B' with, say, 100. All this can be done with a Basic program, an example of which comes later.

With the machine code generated in Figs 1 and 2, (ie programs have been *Run*), type *Save* "multicode" *Code* 48896,1000 to save the code created. Then you will not have to return to the Basic programs except to change the number of channels available.

An example of the use of this sequencer is given in Fig 3. Type it in and *Save* it. An array is filled with the values of the powers of 0.944 multiplied by 100.

```
10 LET Check = 0
20 FOR N =  48896 TO 48938
30   READ Byte
40   POKE N, Byte
50   LET Check = Check + Byte
60 NEXT N
70 IF Check <> 4481 THEN PRINT "Error in data" : STOP
80 DATA 243,17,0,0,33,0,192,78,36,52,126
90 DATA 185,32,10,62,255,211,254,62,0,211
100 DATA 254,54,0,37,44,126,254,0,32,232
110 DATA 6,10,16,254,19,122,254,5,32,219,251,201
```

Fig 1

```
10 INPUT "No. of channels required (at least 2) "; Num
20 LET Addr =. 49664
30 LET Saddr = Addr + 4
40 FOR N = Addr TO Saddr + 17
50   READ Byte
60   POKE N, Byte
70 NEXT N
80 DATA 221,33,0,195,221,126,0,254,0,200,50,38,191,221,126,1
85 DATA 254,255,32,5,33,15,191,54,0,50,0,192
90 LET Addr = Addr + 28
100 FOR N = 2 TO Num
110   POKE Addr, 221
120   POKE Addr + 1, 126
130   POKE Addr + 2, N
140   POKE Addr + 3, 50
150   POKE Addr + 4, N - 1
160   POKE Addr + 5, 192
170   LET Addr = Addr + 6
180 NEXT N
190 FOR N = 1 TO Num
200   POKE Addr, 221
210   POKE Addr + 1, 126
220   POKE Addr + 2, N + Num
230   POKE Addr + 3, 50
240   POKE Addr + 4, N - 1
250   POKE Addr + 5, 193
260   LET Addr = Addr + 6
270 NEXT N
280 FOR N = Addr TO Addr + 15
290   READ Byte
300   POKE N, Byte
310 NEXT N
320 DATA 205,0,191,33,15,191,54,255,1,254,127,237,120,254,190,200
330 LET Addr = Addr + 16
340 FOR N = 1 TO Num * 2 + 1
350   POKE Addr, 221
360   POKE Addr + 1, 35
370   LET Addr = Addr + 2
380 NEXT N
390 POKE Addr, 195
400 POKE Addr + 1, Saddr - (INT(Saddr / 256) * 256)
410 POKE Addr + 2, INT(Saddr / 256)
420 STOP
```

Fig 2

```
10 DIM T(33) : FOR N = 1 TO 33 : LET T(N) = 100 *  0.944 ^ (N - 17)
: NEXT N : REM Set up array containing pitch values
20 LET Key = - 4 : REM Pitch offset used on all notes
30 LET Addr =  49920 : REM Start of data table in memory
40 RESTORE
50 FOR N = 1 TO 32
60   READ L, A, B : REM length, pitch1, pitch2 for each tone
70   POKE Addr, L * 20 : REM Scale up length to reasonable value
80   POKE Addr + 1, T(A + 17 + Key) : REM POKE channel 1 value
90   POKE Addr + 2, T(B + 17 - 12 + Key) : REM '-12' because octave
lower
100   POKE Addr + 3, 0 : REM these are best at zero
110   POKE Addr + 4, 0 : REM  "     "    "   "   "
120   LET Addr = Addr + 5 : REM Move on to next memory area
130 NEXT N
140 DATA 1,7,7, 1,11,7, 1,14,11, 1,14,11
150 DATA 1,16,12, 1,16,12, 1,14,11, 1,11,11
160 DATA 1,7,7, 1,11,7, 1.5,14,11, 0.5,14,11
170 DATA 1,12,12, 1,11,12, 2,9,14
180 DATA 1,7,7, 1,11,7, 2,14,11
190 DATA 1.5,7,4, 0.5,11,4, 1,9,0, 1,7,0, 1,6,2, 1,2,2
200 DATA 1,7,7, 1,11,7, 1.5,14,11, 0.5,9,11
210 DATA 0.5,12,2, 0.5,12,2, 1,11,2, 2,7,7
9000 POKE Addr, 0 : REM Make sure the table ends with a zero
9005 POKE 48920,1 : REM Overall pitch; best at this value
9010 RANDOMIZE USR  49664 : REM Call the machine code
9020 GOTO 9010 : REM ...and again
```

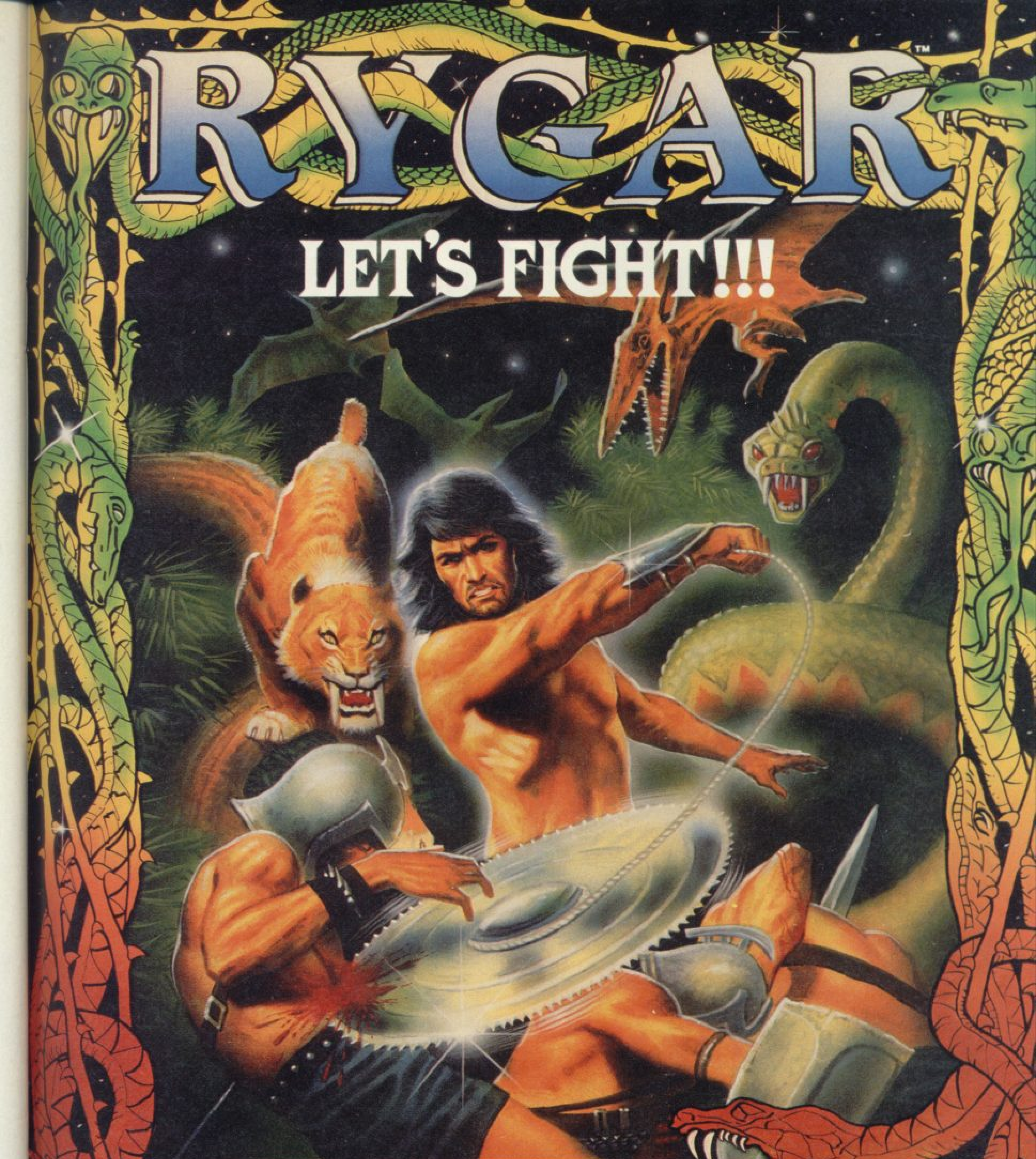
Fig 3

The numbers −16 to 16 in *Beep* terms may be used in the program, but array indices can only be positive in Basic so whenever +17 or −17 crops up, it is to counter that limitation.

Normal Beep *values of length and pitch are read from the data statements, and are converted to the numbers for Pokeing into the table starting at 49920. Run* the program, and wait for it to stop, hopefully with a *Stop* message. Then type *Continue* and hear a... well... familiar tune like you've never heard it before. To play again if you break in, type *Rand Usr* 49664■

David Gosnell

For further information and demonstrations, please write to: David Gosnell, 40 Sixty Acres Road, Prestwood, Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 0PE enclosing a stamped addressed envelope (and a blank tape if you want any programs).



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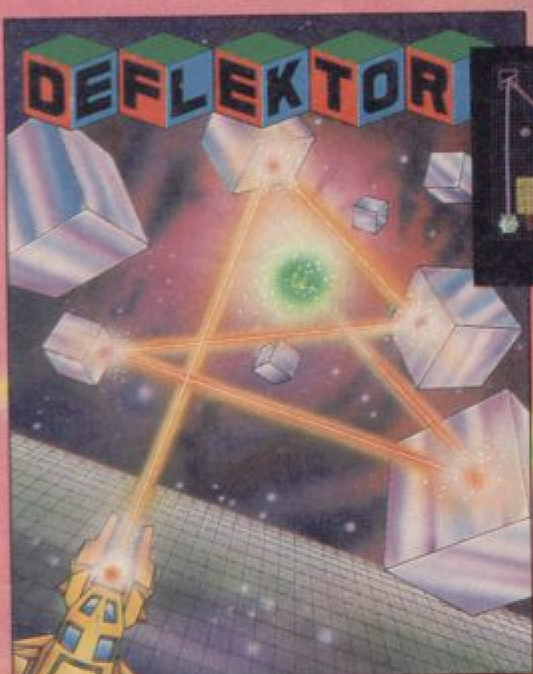


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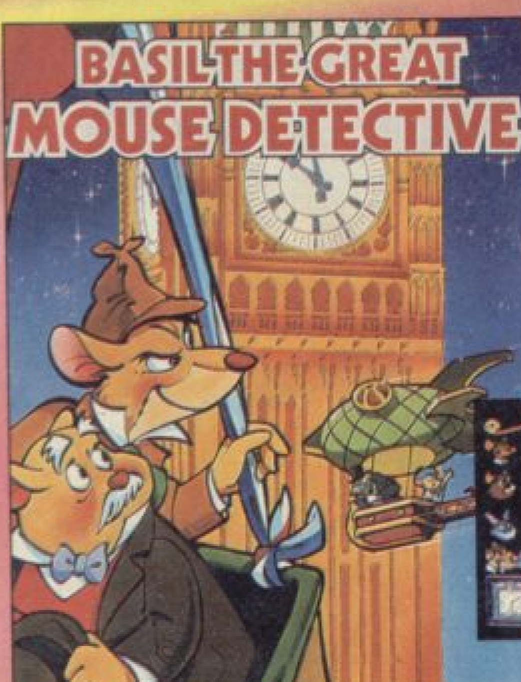
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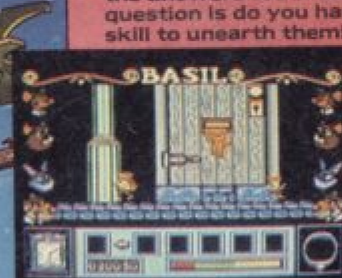
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DARK SCEPTRE

Deep in time **Dark Sceptre** featured like a dream upon the cover of last September SU. Big was its graphics and original its gameplay.

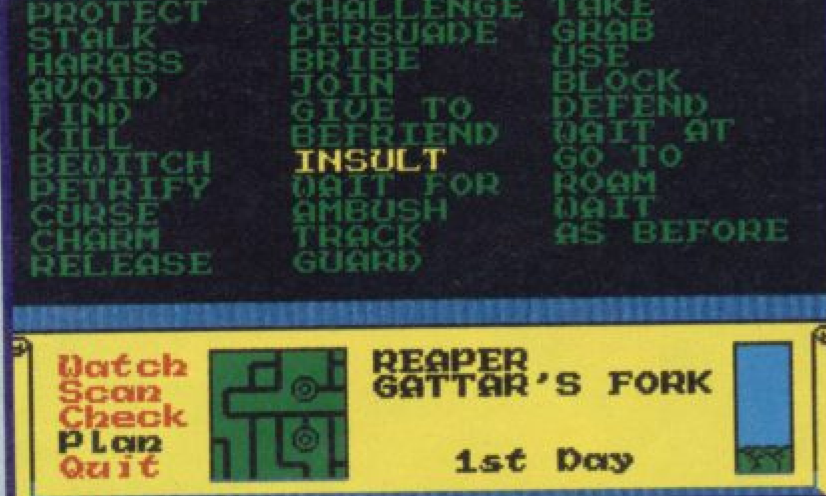
Each month a review copy was expected and there much hunting through the SU mailbag. Many young and noble warrior journalists attempted the mailbag quest but all failed and there was much disappointment.

After many months **Dark Sceptre** drifted into myth and legend and those who still recounted the legend of the massive animated warriors stalking the Isles of the Western Sea were soon treated as halfwits and fools.

And the memory of **Dark Sceptre** all but died, kept alive by a tiny band of faithful followers who swore that one day **Dark Sceptre** would return. "That damn game will turn up sometime," they said. And lo after many eons it did...

To remind those whose memories don't go back as far as last year, **Dark Sceptre** is a strategy game with an adventure-type theme.

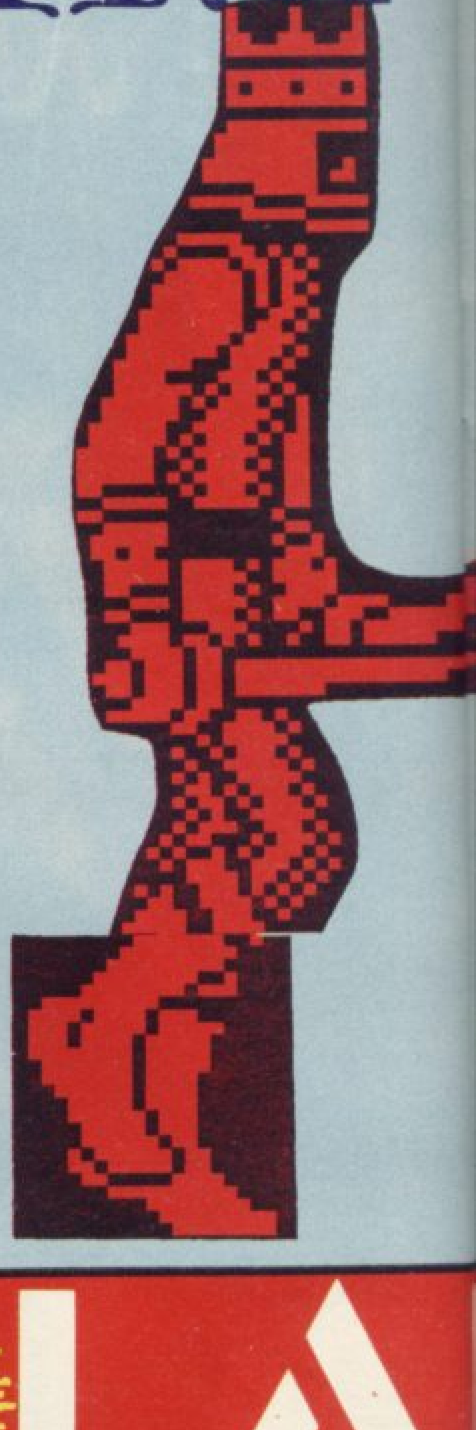
It achieves, in a totally different way, the same thing as Mike Singleton's **Lords of Midnight** – namely presenting what is essentially a 'think' game in a way that is both visually interesting and genuinely involving to play.



Dark Sceptre makes the mechanics of play as easy as possible – menues and cursor select systems – but the strategies you might use in playing the game are almost infinite. For reasons too fixed in the myth of cliche to bother to repeat here your brave team of warriors has to recover an all powerful thingmy called the **Dark Sceptre.** You control a team of good guys and there's one equivalent team of bad guys and various other teams of not-yet-decided guys. To win you need, among other things, to win some of these uncommitted people over to your cause.

Each member of your team has a different set of skills. The Thane is the leader – if he gets killed the rest of the team will probably get very depressed. Mystics have magical powers and are not surprisingly, not much good at thuggish knee-in-the-groin type stuff. Other members of your team are persuaders, messengers and killers.

Playing is like being a football coach. In each 'go' you select the members of your team and give them instructions, sometimes sets of instructions, from a vast list available. These include *Kill* followed by somebody's name or *Bewitch* (turn named person into a spy) *Follow* (ie track but don't attack)



SOLA

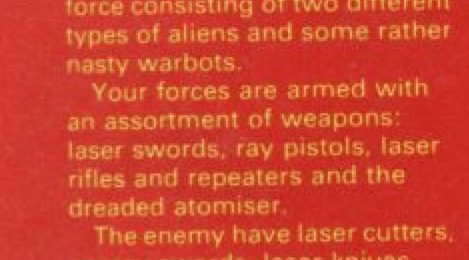
Solar Fire is a tactical space combat game from the same team that wrote the excellent **Samurai** for CRL.

You command six Imperial Legionnaires – three human and three android 'Guardian Angels' – your objective: to wipe out the alien occupants of a secret base. Against you, the computer controlling a varied force consisting of two different types of aliens and some rather nasty warbots.

Your forces are armed with an assortment of weapons: laser swords, ray pistols, laser rifles and repeaters and the dreaded atomiser.

The enemy have laser cutters, energy swords, laser knives, laser rifles and phasers – which are never, ever, set on stun!

The battles take place in a variety of settings – asteroid bases, rocket sites, a shuttle base – but they all have common features. Each is divided into squares (which regulate movement) and have various walls and stairs and space craft and bits and bobs of odd equipment lying around which obstruct movement and offer some cover for hard-pressed combatants.



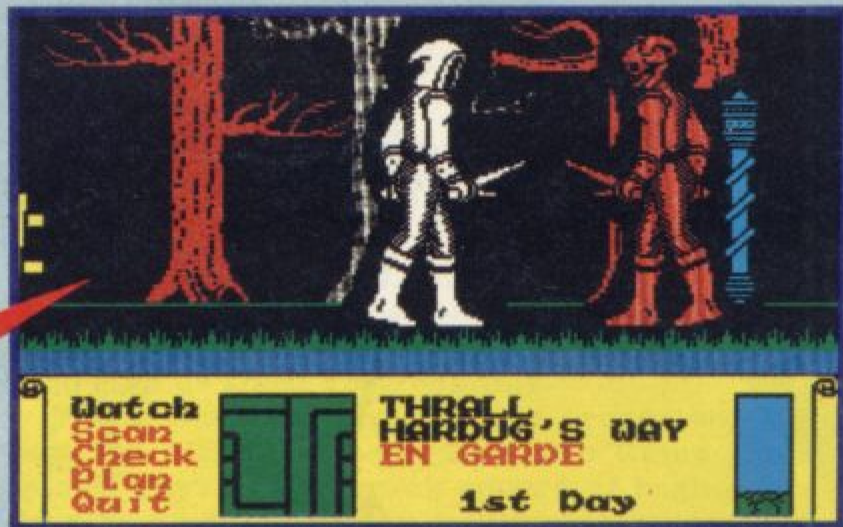
The screen is divided into three parts. The biggest, taking up about half the area, is a map window. Below it, you have a series of icons representing various commands you may issue to your troops. On the right of the screen, you have a series of status windows, which display who you are currently controlling, how fast he can move, how much damage he can take, how experienced he is and what weapons he has. I say he, but of course it could just as easily be she or it in this game. It's a bit difficult to tell the sex of someone in a spacesuit, and what do you call an android? (Answer: anything you like, but if it's carrying an atomiser you'd better be polite...)

You move first. There's a number of icons. The first ends your turn. The second allows you to cycle through your force to pick the legionnaire you want to move. The third is a radar device – this gives you a rough idea of where your troops are in relation to the layout of the base



and various sorts of threatening or cajoling of the other team warriors into joining your side. Aside from people there are significant objects in **Dark Sceptre** which give import powers and commands like *Take, Grabe* and *Use* relate to these.

Having issued instructions



SINCLAIR CLASSIC USER

you can sit back and see what happens – watch each warrior move across a map of the playing area and flick screens between each warrior to see them in detail – the massive sprite graphics that are the game's trademark.

Despite what you might think, it isn't boring at all. It's fascinating watching to see what happens and, anyway, different warriors accomplish their orders at different times so there are always new plans to be instigated.

Sooner or later, on purpose or by design, a good guy will meet a bad guy and there will be a fight. Swords are drawn and they fight it out. There is no luck in any battle, the outcome is the inevitable result of the relative strengths, taking into account a host of factors of the two combatants. When two fighters are closely matched fights may continue for quite some while – with the advantage constantly changing.

When each 'turn' is over you take stock of where you stand – how you faired in your 'go' – and issue your next set of instructions to your team.

Dark Sceptre is in its own way, now, as original a game as **Lords of Midnight** was then, and technically it's very clever

STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

indeed.

And it still looks impressive, even a year after its essential details were finalised.

Don't buy it under the mistaken impression that it is some sort of **Barbarian** equivalent though, or you'll be disappointed. If, on the other hand, you like the sound of a stunningly impressive, highly original and dramatic strategy game, well, are you in for a treat!■



FACTS BOX

Worth the wait. It's Lords of Midnight with the emphasis on strategy. It's great but don't expect Barbarian.

DARK SCEPTRE
Label: Beyond
Author: Mike Singleton
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

RFIRE

and the positions of the enemy. The fourth icon governs movement: select it and you can move your people where you like, as far as their movement allowance permits. The next four icons cover the weapons you have at your disposal.



Combat is simple. If you select a weapon, you get a window in the bottom right of the screen with what looks like a radar screen on it – a circle with a line on it. Move the line until it points in the right direction then hit *Fire* .

The game is deceptively simple, and easy enough to master at its easiest level. But there are five levels to choose from, and the hardest is absolute murder. Combine that with the different maps you get, and you're getting a lot of play for your money.

Solar Fire is not original. A long time ago (three or four years) Red Shift put out a great little game called **Rebelstar Raiders**: not quite as good graphically, and handicapped by being a two-player game only, but brilliant all the same. Then there was **Shadowfire** from Beyond, and, of course, **Samurai**, from CRL. In **Samurai**, you could design your own forces: it would have been nice to be able to do the same here. What's more, the computer doesn't always move its forces in a sensible way (luckily for the player, perhaps). The worst problem is the complicated instruction booklet.

But for all its lack of originality and its faults, **Solar Fire** is still a great game. I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone, whether or not they are already interested in strategy games. And when you take into account the fact that Astros is producing add-on scenarios in the form of new maps, then it's even better■

FACTS BOX

Thoroughly recommended. A wonderful tactical space combat shoot 'em up. Let's atomise those eeties!

SOLAR FIRE
Label: Astros Productions
Author: In-house
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★★★★★★★ 10

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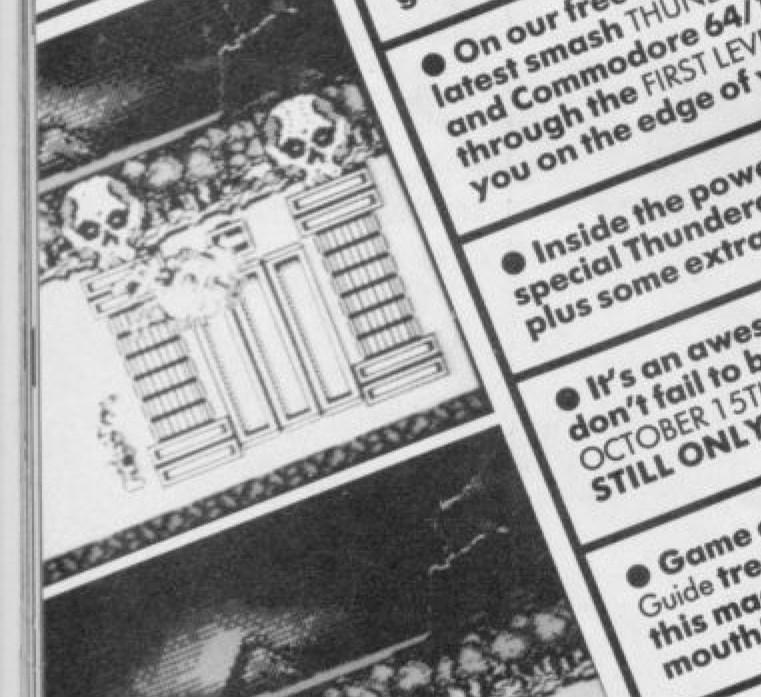
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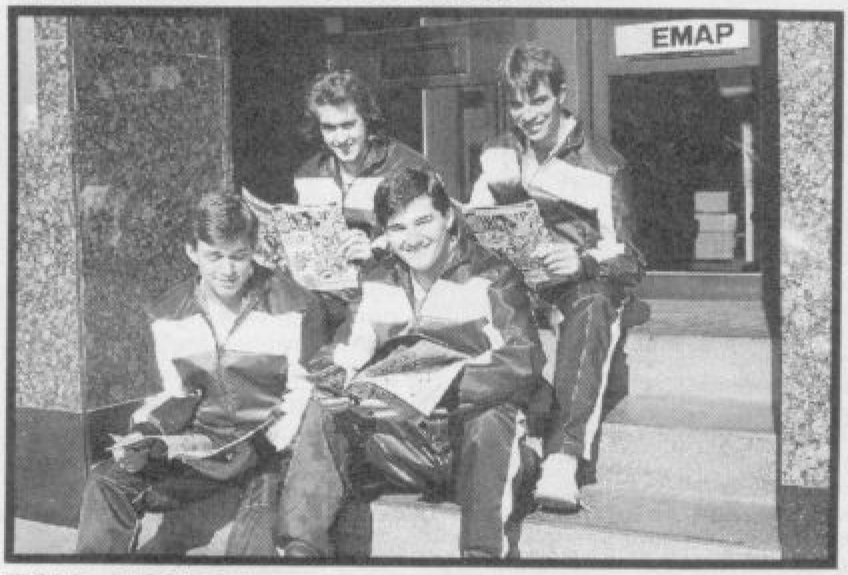
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OUT NOW!
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SU Challenge THE US

Just recently we stuck a bunch of American arcade wizards in front of a selection of Spectrum games and asked them to play them and give us their impressions.

These were not just any old arcade wizards, but the official American Video Game Champions, guys whose track record of high scores was so high that they hold various world records – including the Guinness World Record – and are now employed full time as advisors to several American coin-op manufacturers. They don't program, they just play, their work is to play games . . . life is hard huh?



THE TEAM

STEVE HARRIS (20) Favourite games **Robotron** and **Tempest**
JEFF PETERS (21) Favourite games **Pole Position, I Robot, Domino Man**
DON NAVERT (22) Favourite games **Alien Syndrome, APB, Danger Zone**
PERRY RODGERS (25) Favourite games **Mario Bros, Bubble Bobble, Solomon's Key**

THE GAMES

XECUTOR Ace
SLAP FIGHT Ocean
ZUB Mastertronic
PLEXAR Mastertronic
GAME OVER Ocean
ROAD RUNNER US Gold

Xecutor

★★★★★★★★★

We thought we'd start them off on something overtly good. But how would they rate even the best Spectrum stuff compared to the likes of the coin-op material they are used to? Would they wait around long enough for the tape to Load? "Jeez, do you always have to wait this long for the games?" said Don. We apologised.

They liked **Xecutor.** Said Perry "I really like the way you have to trade off the bonus stars and decide if you want to go for extra firepower right now or take a chance of getting something better later." Jeff: "This reminds me a little of **Gradius,** the graphics are pretty good." Jeff went on to score 5,400 on his first attempt at the game.

Slap Fight

★★★★★★★★★

We chose this one because it's a Spectrum coin-op conversion. The Americans were familiar with the arcade version of the game. We thought a bit about explaining about attribute clash. Then we decided not to – after all the game had loaded. "It's in black and white! Is the TV broken?" they said. "Shut up and start playing the game" we said.

They were quite impressed by the graphics on **Slap Fight:** "It's a pretty accurate version of the original and the graphics are quite detailed," said Jeff. But there was a problem. "You can't see the bullets – where are the bullets? Is that a bullet?" Jeff went down in a ball of flames. Everybody agreed that the game looked pretty good but was virtually unplayable because of the difficulty of seeing sudden death coming at you. "I'm not really that impressed," said Don.

Zub

★★★★★★★★★

This classic from Mastertronic went down very well. They even stopped making jokes about tape loading which was a blessing. Everybody had a go at it – hah! – nobody did very well at it. People were impressed. "It's really nice, just a good simple idea and the sound seems to be better on this one." (We didn't bother explaining about different sound chips in 128K's and stuff.)

"I like this kind of game a lot," said Perry. When told the game was out on budget all were suitably amazed. We felt proud. At this point the game crashed. (Our Spectrum's fault.) "Lunch?" we suggested.

Plexar

★★★★★★★★★

Another from Mastertronic, since **Zub** was so successful. **Plexar** is sort of like **Trailblazer** in that you bounce a ball along a pathway in space and try not to fall down holes. The Americans were only slightly impressed. "It's very simple." "It's sort of unique." "It's a bit different." "Quite interesting," they said. "This is a bit boring," they meant.

Game Over

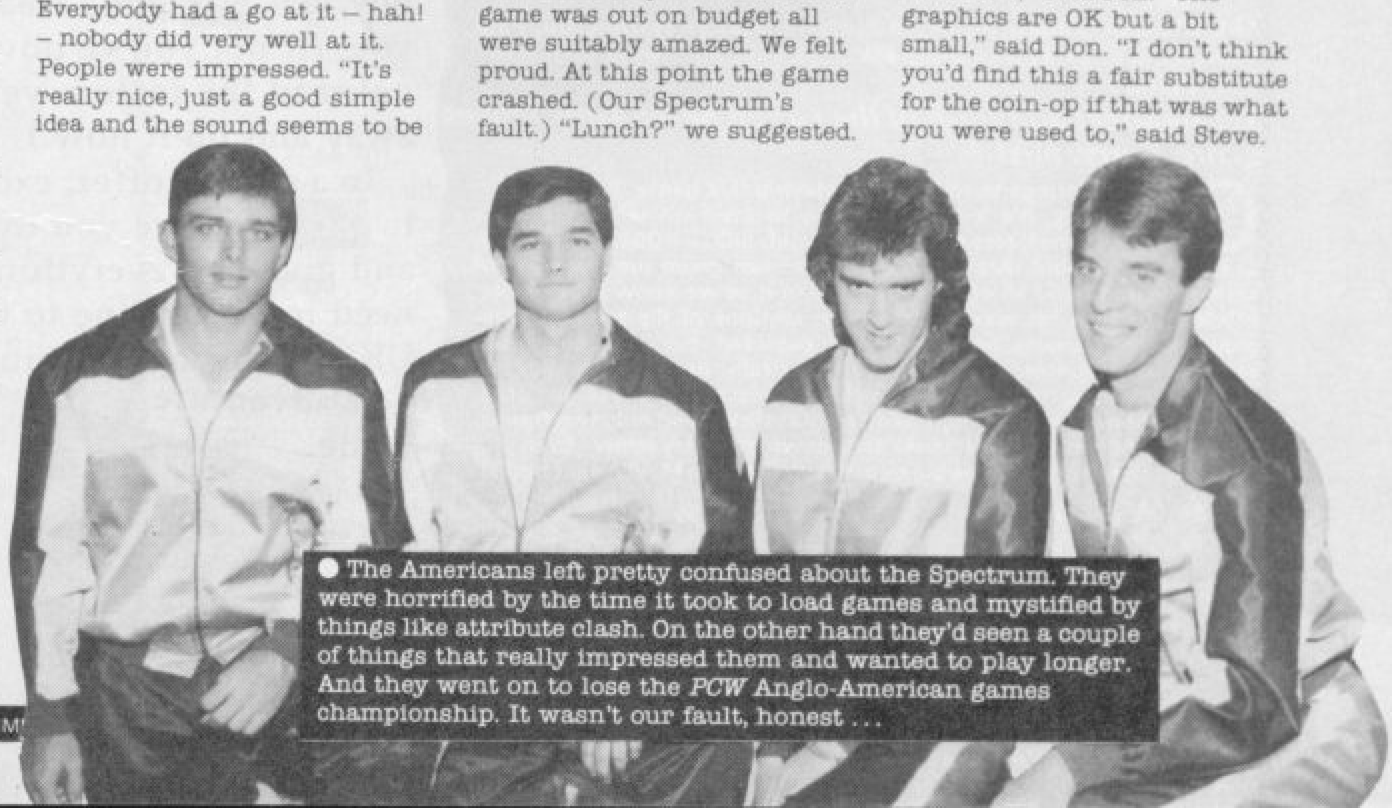
★★★★★★★★★

This being a fairly straight arcade game but not being based on any existing arcade stuff we thought we'd try this one on the team. They got very confused about attribute clash, of which there is plenty in **Game Over:** "Heh it's changing colours, where'd I go," said Don. They decided they didn't like it because of the colour problems but we think it was because they didn't manage to get past the first level.

Road Runner

★★★★★★★★★

Another coin-op game the guys new well. We showed them the Spectrum version. "This doesn't play right somehow," said Jeff. "The graphics are OK but a bit small," said Don. "I don't think you'd find this a fair substitute for the coin-op if that was what you were used to," said Steve.



● The Americans left pretty confused about the Spectrum. They were horrified by the time it took to load games and mystified by things like attribute clash. On the other hand they'd seen a couple of things that really impressed them and wanted to play longer. And they went on to lose the *PCW* Anglo-American games championship. It wasn't our fault, honest . . .

TWILIGHT ZONE

FOOTBALL FOLLOWER, FIXGEN AND POOLSWINNER

UTILITY Label: **Selec, 37 Councillor Lane, Cheadle, Cheshire** Price: **£26.50** (all three) **£16.50** (Fixgen plus one other) Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Mike Wright**

Just about the only football pool prediction suite – works well but slow and somewhat overpriced

It's often said that a knowledge of football decreases the chance of a pools win. So I've no idea what the combination of Football Follower, Fixgen and Poolswinner – three pools predictor programs from Selec Software – will do for your chances.

Football Follower is a database to keep track to results, Fixgen is a database of current fixtures and Poolswinner is a results 'prediction' program.

Football Follower the database program for football league results provides a complete range of team statistics. It comes complete with a recent set of results for the English and Scottish Leagues, although I guess, it could be used to keep league records for most team sports.

Up-dating a league involves entering details of all the fixtures before the results can be entered. The fixtures can be entered either manually or, by using the Fixgen program. Fixgen, the database of the current season's fixtures, can be used to prepare a fixture list for use in Football Follower or Poolswinner simply by typing in two dates. Bacause games do get cancelled or rearranged allowance is made for the fixture list to be altered. The whole season's fixtures for any team can be displayed or printed.

Adding the results requires considerable patience waiting for the prompts to enter the number of goals for the home team then the away team match by match. And you have to be very careful to get the results right first time because correcting a wrong result can only be done by re-entering all the results for that division.

League tables and statistics are produced from the main menu. On the Spectrum the league tables are given in two parts, home results first followed by away results. The statistics provided are comprehensive, showing for one team – league position, points scored, goal difference, results of the last home and away fixtures and the matches, both home and away since a defeat, score draw, draw and win and home results for the two teams or for the fixture list as a whole. The calculation of the tables and statistics is very slow but not so slow as to make the program unusable.

Poolswinner, the prediction program, operates in a similar way to Football Follower. A fixture list is created, or loaded from Football Follower or Fixgen. The prediction part of the program gives lists, based on ranked probabilities, of the matches ending as scoredraws, draws, aways or homes. The predictions are based on the weighted outcome of the most recent results stored in the database of results. The weighting factor can be varied, and the team's league position can be used to affect the probabilities. The manual recommends including the league position but does warn that it will tend to produce form results with resulting lower dividends.

When the results are known they must be entered before the up-dated league tables can be produced and the up-dated database saved for the next run. The results can also be saved and subsequently loaded into Football Follower.

The program suite is just about the only one of its kind and difficult to imagine any feature that has been omitted, except possibly details of goalscorers. However all three units run very slowly and the editing facilities for correcting league and results details are pretty poor.

I reckon this means the programs are overpriced despite being the only ones available! ■

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

CALL ME PSYCHO

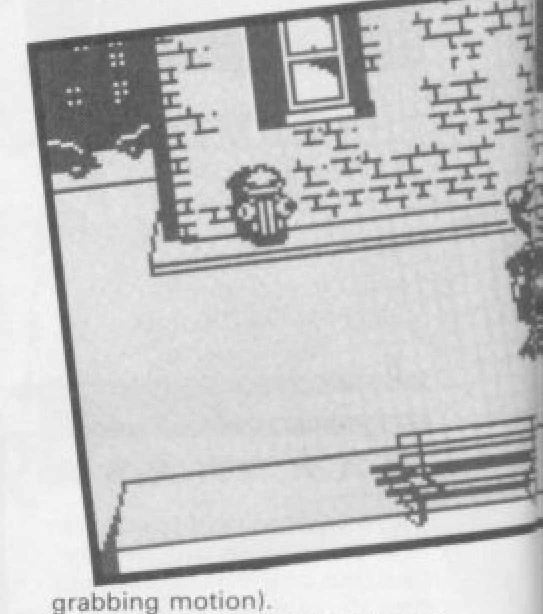
ARCADE Label: **Pirate Software** Authors: **Martyn Hartley and Paul Scriven** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Yet another bad rip-off of the Green Beret/Army Moves genre. Sorry, next

One word springs to mind when playing this game. Tacky. Tacky, tacky, tacky. It's a poor storyline to start off with. You take control of the latest mega-battle droid, SIO21/KO987 also known as Psycho (or should that be Sicko?) He's been given the usual job of saving the earth and all of human civilisation as we know it by single-handedly battling his way across seven sections of flip-screen battle-grounds. The screens are quite well depicted but lack any great variation. The sprites, however, are beautifully depicted, in glorious monochromatic cartoon style, vaguely reminiscent of those in Cobra. The animation is awful, though. With terrible flicker and only two frames of movement per sprite it really lets down the playability. Even the numerous different weapons fail to make up the loss. Maybe next time ■

★★★☆☆
★★★☆☆ 4

STREET



Street Hassle is the first release from the new look Melbourne House – the first after its take-over by Mastertronic.

It's a sort of cartoon Ninja game with strong **Renegade** overtones. It isn't great but is curiously addictive in a way. And it's quite funny.

You control a large (if sparsely detailed) muscleman complete with ridiculously tiny swimming trunks. He trolls off down an ordinary suburban street and is accosted by assorted upstanding citizens.

Including stray dogs and grannies. A large part of the game is therefore of the traditional sort – various joystick and *Fire* button combinations get your man headbutting, grabbing, punching, walking or ducking.

What moves are available partly depends on who you are attacking – for example the dog is ameanable both to having its tummy tickled (joystick down) and headbutting (a sort of grabbing motion).

There is a little more to it than that, however. The game isn't a celebration of mindless violence. You must try not to attack the grannies, for example, and this seemingly simple objective is actually very difficult in the heat of battle – they have a habit of stumbling into your path whilst you are dealing with someone else. If

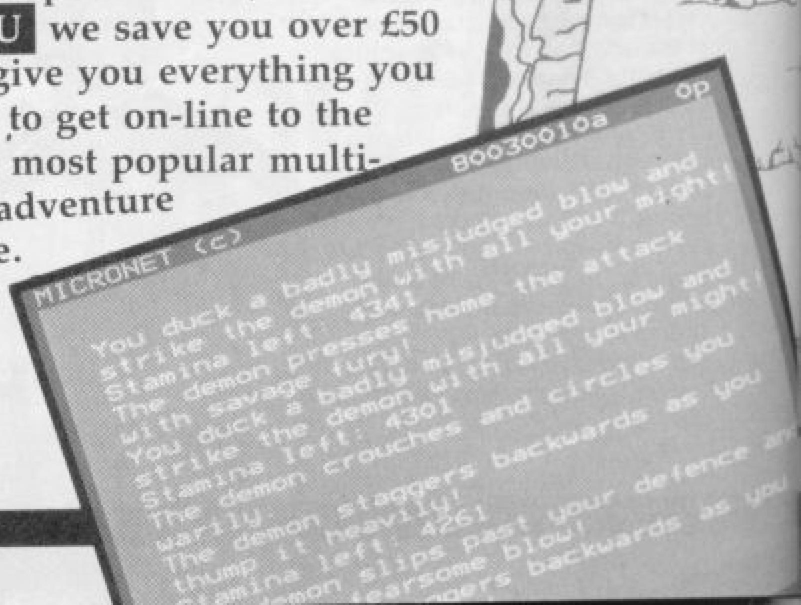
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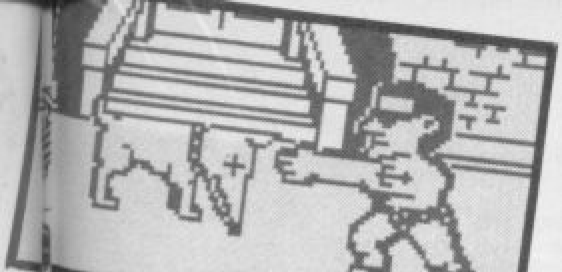
Shades

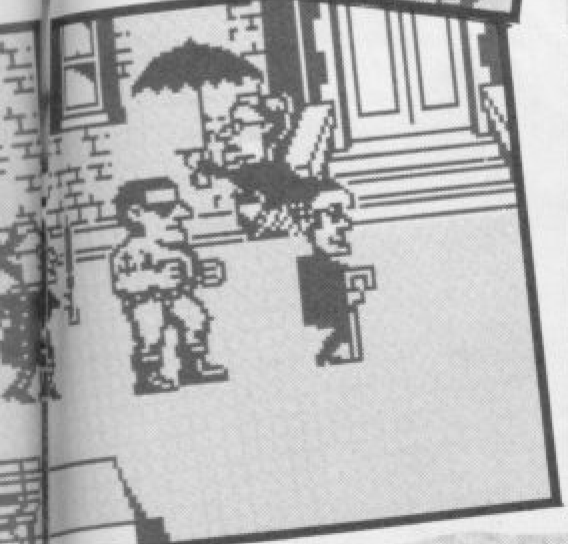


If you've already checked out the features on Shades (page 38, this SU) and like the sound of it, boy, has SU got a treat for you. (If not you've obviously not read the feature yet – go away and do it now.)

In a special offer, exclusive to SU we save you over £50 and give you everything you need to get on-line to the UK's most popular multi-user adventure game.









FACTS BOX

Cartoony fun-style Renegade street violence game. Graphics don't impress but it is moderately addictive and quite funny

STREET HASSLE
Label: Melbourne House
Author: Beam Software
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Tamara Howard

★★★★☆
★★★☆☆ 7

PROGRAMMERS

BEAM SOFTWARE is Melbourne House's prolific in-house team based in Australia
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Hungry Horace** *(Melbourne House*, 1983), **The Hobbit** *(Melbourne House*, 1983) **Way of the Exploding Fist 43***(Melbourne House*, 1985) **Rock 'n' Wrestle** *(Melbourne House*, 1986) **Judge Dredd** *(Melbourne House*, 1987) **Fist II** *(Melbourne House*, 1987), **Bazooka Bill** *(Melbourne House*, 1987), **Knuckle Busters** *(Melbourne House*, 1987), **Doc The Destroyer** *(Melbourne House*, 1987), **Inspector Gadget** *(unreleased*, 1987)

ARCADE REVIEW

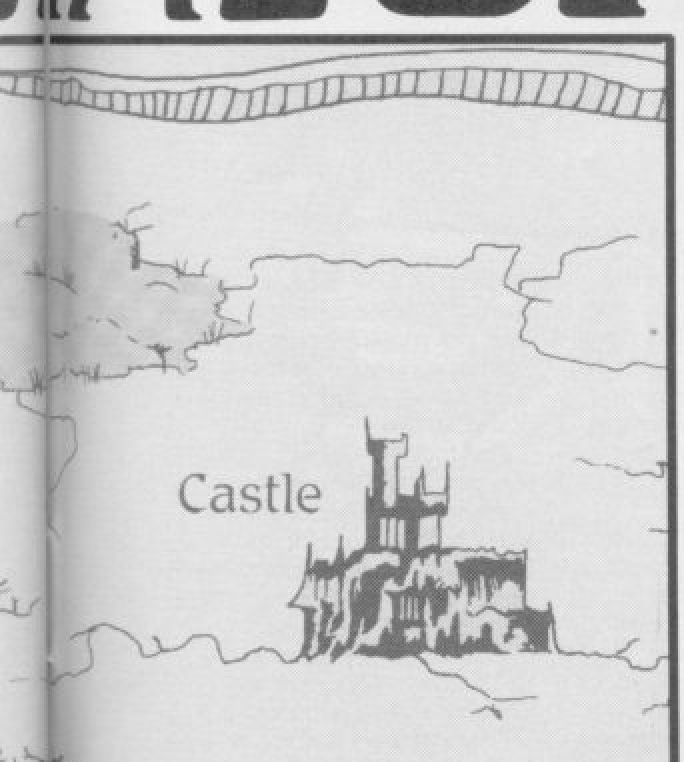
HASSLE

you should accidentally start to wipe out grannies they retaliate by chucking things at you and hitting you over the head with their umbrellas.

There are a few other elements to the game – occasionally (Melbourne House is trying for the Ageist Game of the Year Award) someone walks on and places a box in front of you – this may either be a bonus life or a bomb character, you'd better figure out which quickly.

I dunno about this one. I don't like the graphics – they are similar to those in the ill fated **Inspector Gadget** they begin large but are somehow empty of detail. It's a technique Beam, the programmer, has used before so they must obviously like it but I think it makes the game look insubstantial. The gameplay is OK and the mindless violence is funny, as are the bizarre comments that run across the bottom of the screen as you play. It bothered me that I got through three out of six levels the second time around (streets are loaded in from tape in batches of six at a time). That strikes me as a bit easy particularly since at the time I didn't know it wasn't OK to total the old ladies and still got to second place in the high scores chart. Maybe this aspect of the gameplay needs tightening up. It's no fun unless you can do a bit of granny-bashing. Don't buy without seeing first■

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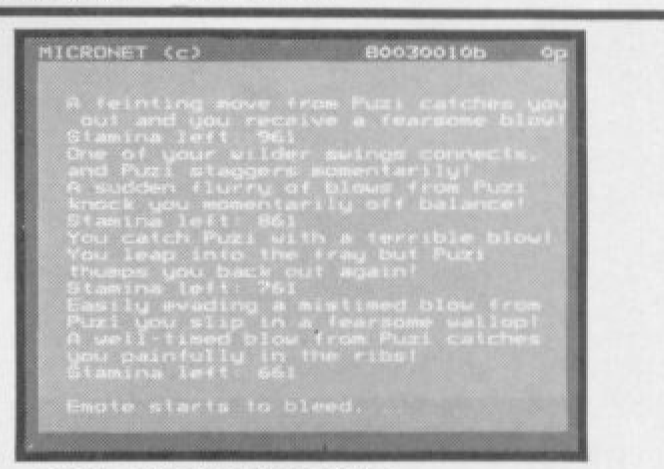
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Prints of darkness

Multiprint is a printer interface from Romantic Robot, the replicants responsible for the notorious and beloved Multiface. As you might infer from the name, this latest beast is a cross between your average Centronics printer interface and that hacker's dream machine.

It shows in appearance alone. Multiprint looks stunningly like Multiface, Red Button and all. It even allows you to run Multiface software, like the **Genie Disassembler**. The ribbon cable hanging out of the edge connector slot at the back and the changed labels (the back one still mentions Multiface) give the game away.

Multiprint interfaces with Basic in time-honoured fashion. Special versions of old commands set things up and allow the normal printer commands (*Lprint, Llist, Copy* etc) to work with an Epson compatible Centronics/parallel printer. Non-Epsons will work, but you'll lose some features. Any Spectrum apart from the parallel equipped +3 will work with the interface.

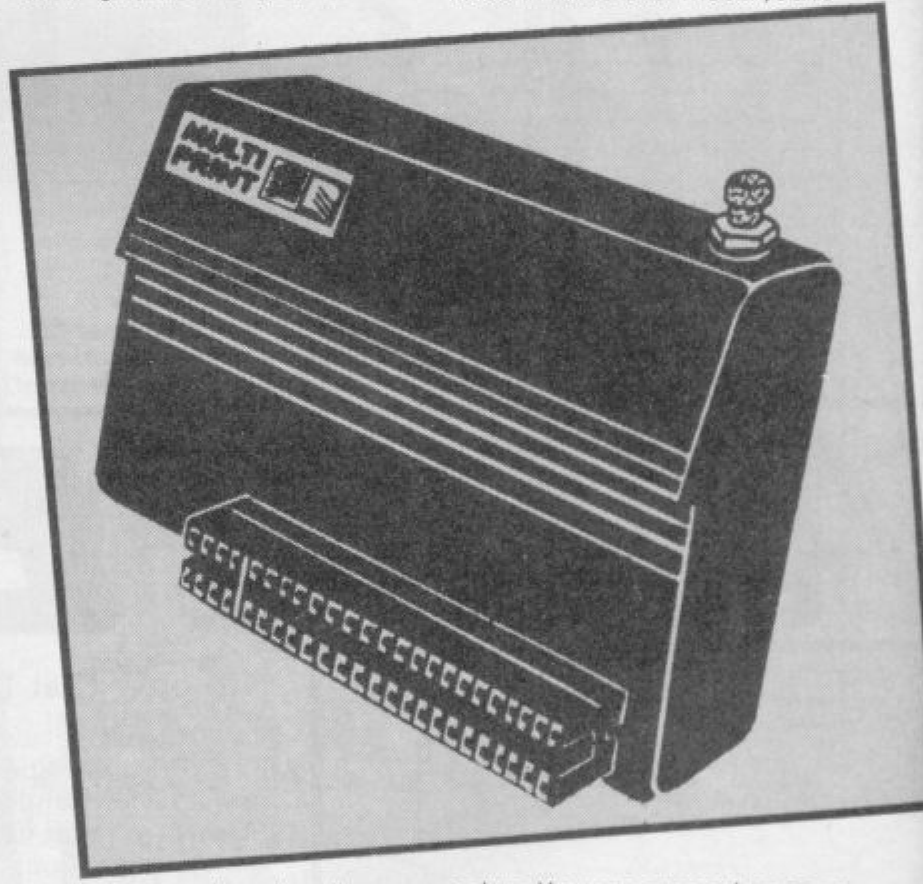
The command which does all the hard work is *Rem*, followed by MP and some mnenomic instructions. For example, *Rem* MP, WD66, LM13 sets the width of the printed output to 66 columns with a left margin of 13. Similar magic works the line spacing, extra line feeds and page size.

Multiface can also manage four subtly different types of *Copy*. First, fastest and least flexible is *Text Copy* (Rem MP, CPT). This just copies all characters on the screen to the printer in roughly their correct positions. Fine for word processing or account stuff, but no graphics. For graphic fiends there are the other three *Copys*, Normal Size Hi-Res (CPN), Large Size Hi-Res (CPL) and Large Shaded (CPS), but that sounds like a myth. The first two do different sizes of pixel-based copy where any ink is black and all paper is white, and the last has a creditable attempt at representing your Spectrum's sixteen chromatic coruscations as shades of grey pattern. Once you've chosen, the old *Copy* command does the deed.

The interface also knows about Spectrum graphics characters, and can print both the predefined and the user-defined variety with equal facility. You can also set up to six Print Driver strings, so that with a single *Lprint Chr$*, your printer can receive a stream of command bytes (up to four per PD string). This can be a useful way to change between (say) underlined and normal printing from Basic.

For those with a limited attention span, *Rem* MP by itself calls up a menu screen or two to help you set up all these tedious options. So don't say Romantic don't bend over backwards to help you.

Ah yes, the Red Button. Again, the perceptive might guess that this is a Good Bit. Press this while the Spectrum is doing something (and that includes running your fave game), and a menu appears on the screen. Once again, the Multiface ancestry is strong, with the traditional toolkit and other pokerama paraphenalia to hand. Most important, given what the thing is, is the capability to dump the screen in whatever mode you've set up. You can even set your own special *Copy* mode, providing it uses not more than four bytes of control sequence and you can work out what the interface is going to do...



The manual is short, useful and tells you exactly how to use the interface with various favourite word processors, disk drives and all that jazz. The sort of info people need, and usually write to *Sinclair Surgery* for. And the port addressing is identical to the Kempston interface, so lots of software should work with it.

I've had the interface now for about three weeks, and it all performs as advertised. It doesn't have the built-in word processor that the Ramprint interface has, but it does have a lot more hackery potential. And a Red Button. Who could resist? Not I■

Rupert Goodwins

Price: £39.95

Multiface 128

The Multiface 128 is the 128K up-date of Romantic Robot's popular utility.

And it's a pretty powerful hunk of hardware in its own right – the Poke person's delight in fact.

Hooked up to any Spectrum, it allows any program to be stopped, screens to be dumped and memory to be examined and 'tweaked' to magical effect.

Mind you, you'll need to know your way around machine-code pretty thoroughly to understand what you're looking at. It won't let you do anything you couldn't have done anyway – it just makes it less painstaking.

The memory examination function (called, alas, the *Multi Toolkit*) is a bit crude. You can look at blocks of Ram and Rom in hexadecimal or as text, and can *Poke* new values in for the infinite lives. It's quite slow, though, and it helps if you can translate Z80 code to and from hex.

This is where Genie – Multiface Disassembler – comes in. This is an optional extra, a program that loads into Multiface 128's internal 8K Ram. When it's in, the Multiface is a changed beast. Now when the button gets pressed a new menu appears – *Ret Dis Text Num Z80 Find Mx:x*. Stirring stuff.

***Ret* returns you to the program you interrupted. *Dis* starts to disassemble Ram or Rom into proper Z80 mnemonics. *Text* displays in decimal of hex. *Z80* shows the complete status of the CPU in the Spectrum, registers, flags, interrupt status, the lot, as it was when the button was pressed. *Find* scans through the whole of Ram for a sequence of numbers. *Mx:x* displays (and lets you set) the Rom:Ram pages for a 128K+2 Spectrum.**

***Dis* is incredibly useful if you're in the habit of hunting for infinite lives or want to inspect the Rom.**

***Text* and *Num* do much the same as the standard toolkit, except that they do it faster. *Z80* is almost as much fun as *Dis* because, not only does it show what the Z80 was doing, but it allows you to alter the registers and flags.**

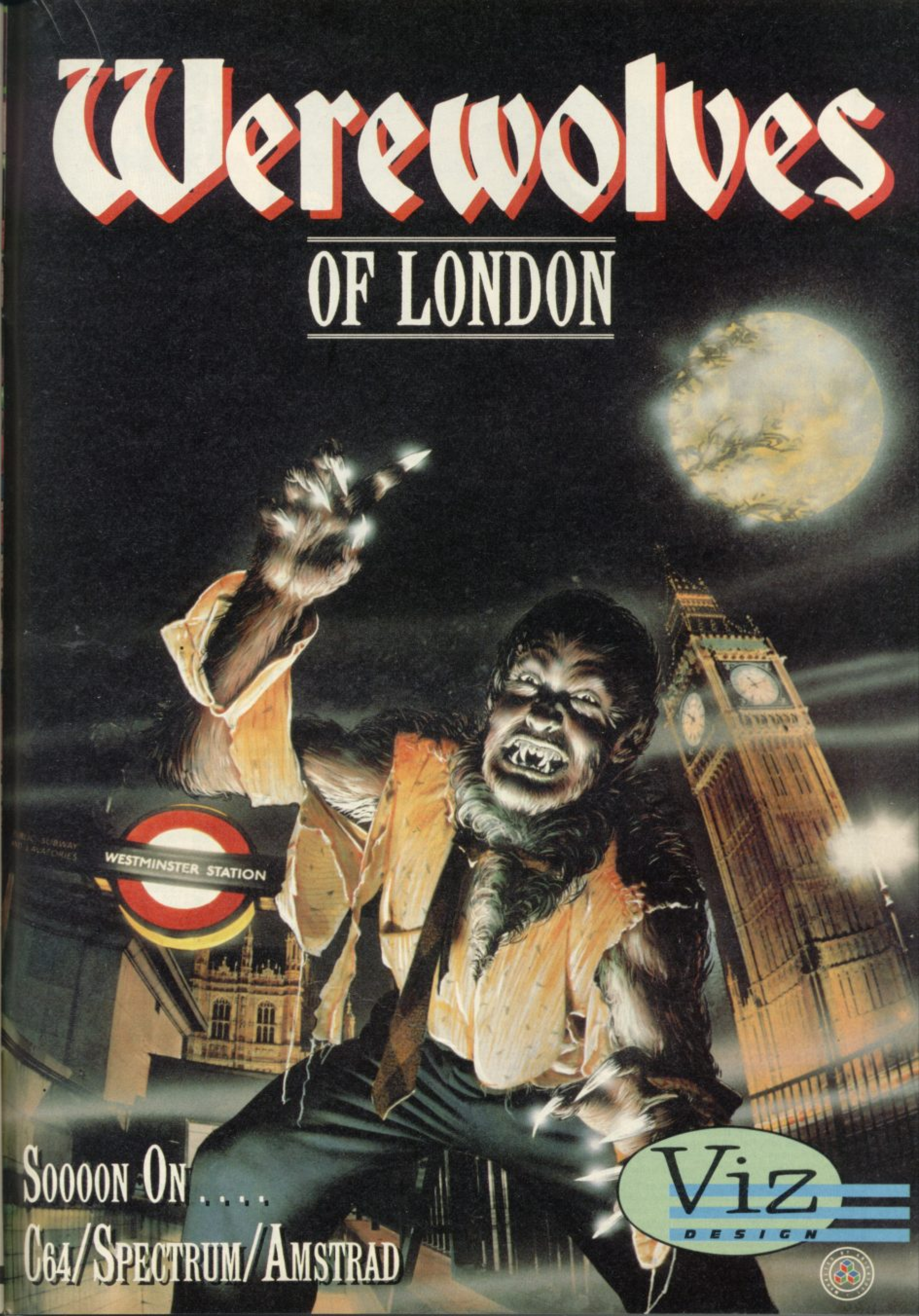
There are a few things not on the menu. *H* toggles between hex and decimal at all times. *S* sets the device scrolling, so you can sit back and watch the disassembly unfurl. *C* copies the top eight lines of the screen to the printer, and *A* allows you to *Poke* stuff into Ram.

Everything happens in an eight-line window at the top of the screen. Genie, like Multiface, stores the old screen, so that when the time comes to return to the program you're inspecting nothing is amiss.

There are a few things that could be nicer about Genie. The *Find* facility is pretty limited (to find a text string, you have to convert it to hex by hand first), and you still have to know Z80 mnemonics in hex to be able to patch a program. Similarly, it would have been very useful to inpect Ram as hex and text simultaneously.

Having said that, considering that the program fits in about 5K, it's impressive. It knows all about paging and the Spectrum 128K+2's little ways. The printer support is good enough to be genuinely useful. And I don't think I'm going to want to be without it, because it makes messing about with machine code such a joy. If you're into infinite lives – and know a bit about machine code – or you're heavily into Z80 mnemonics it's an essential purchase■

Price: £44.95.


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DESIGN

Dinamic doesn't make it easy on itself. It makes games that are *hard* – too hard for most reviewers in fact and often large sections of its games are never discussed.

Let's hope that's not what happens with **Freddy Hardest** its latest and possibly greatest game. The point is that Part 1 (around 48K's worth!) is a) fairly impressive b) pretty difficult but Part 2 (another 48K) is a) absolutely brilliant and b) pretty difficult.

Describing graphics as 'cartoonlike' has become somewhat meaningless, so let's say that the **Freddy Hardest** sprite is superbly animated, large, and very detailed. The guy seems to have a real character – he thinks he's cool (check out the haircut) but obviously he's a dork (note the legs).

In Part 1 he just has to try to get across the planet surface by leaping over volcanoes and zapping or kicking his way past some of the most brilliantly designed aliens seen in a Spectrum arcade game. From time to time he comes across enormous gaps that require some pretty exact leaping to successfully get across – luckily the amount of precise control you have over the leap (it works according to how long you hold the *Fire* button down) is enormous. Practise makes perfect so if you get it wrong it's you and not your joystick...



As Freddy leaps and kicks his way onward the aliens get more and more nasty. The first group are a bunch of dull-looking potato creatures – fry them with your laser when the chips are down. (Sorry about that – a *Carry On* film was on last night). Later on you get the bouncing ants, a far more worthy – and deadly – adversary. They tend to bounce straight into your path as you leap over a passing volcano – you'll need to combine all your blasting and kicking skills to get past them.

Part 2 is a little like several other games but most of all it reminds me of **Impossible Mission**. The general plot is part of the reason but it's the speed and excitement combined with absolutely wonderful graphics that is the real key. Set below the planet surface are a multitude of different levels reached via transporter pads. Freddy's task here is to interrogate a series of computers to find the whereabouts of various fuel pods and other equipment which will allow him to escape.





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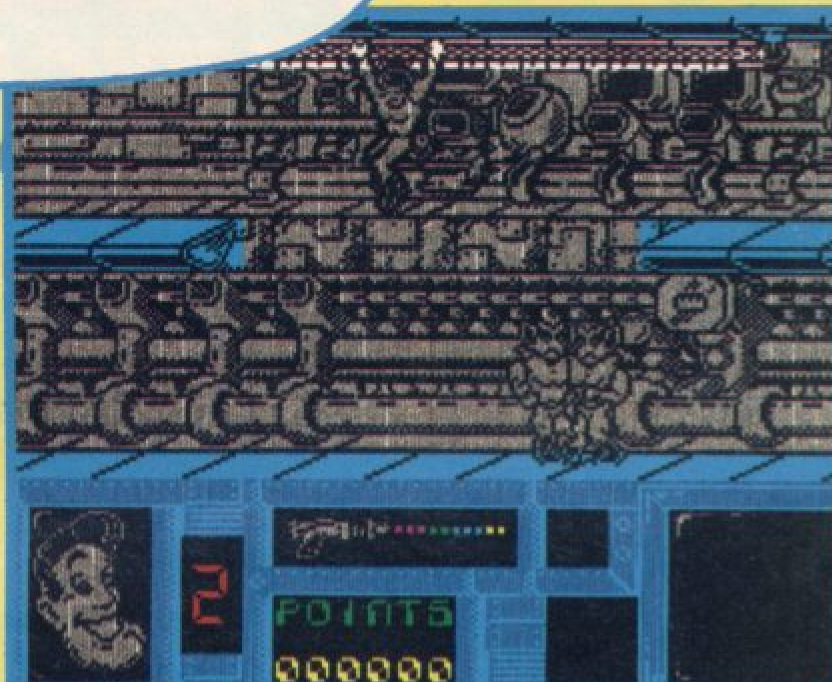
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FREDDY HARDEST

PROGRAMMERS
DINAMIC is a Spanish software house marketed here by Ocean. For more details see SU 64. It has an extensive in-house development team consisting of graphics artists and programmers who work across a number of systems. A Basketball game soon to be released here has been the best selling game in Spanish history.
SOFTOGRAPHY: **Army Moves** (*Ocean*, 1987) **Game Over** (*Ocean*, 1987)

ARCADE ★ REVIEW



FACTS BOX

Gigantic arcade game with brilliant cartoon graphics – slightly unwieldy structure leaves it just short of Classic

FREDDY HARDEST
Label: Ocean
Author: Dinamic
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Kempston

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★★★★★★☆ 9

There is a partial attempt at 3D in this section – the backdrop is flat with key equipment like computer terminals and lifts drawn with a very effective illustion of perspective. The actual walkways are drawn in the same way and the end result looks marvellous.

In this section a whole new selection of aliens plague Freddy's life including what for a long time I believed was a raincoat, (technical problems with the mighty SU TV).

This section is mostly two-colour, so no attribute problems but Dinamic has cleverly used spot areas of colour so that the overall effect is not of drabness – it looks great.

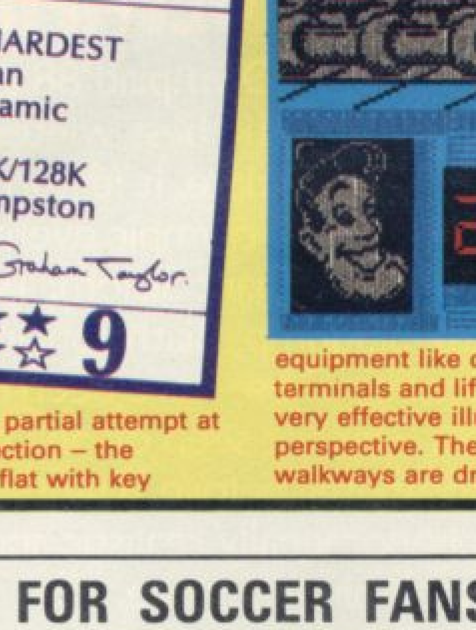
Criticisms? No serious ones but I think Dinamic lets itself down in the structure of its game. Part 1 goes on for too long and is essentially very simple though fantastic to look at. Part 2 is of similar length but seems more involved and inventive.

Nevertheless there is lots to recommend this one – it has some of the best graphics design seen since the **Knight Lore** period of Ultimate and is very exciting to play.

Will you be one of that elite band who persevere and survive long enough in Part 1 to gain access to the brilliant stuff in Part 2?■

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NATO ASSAULT

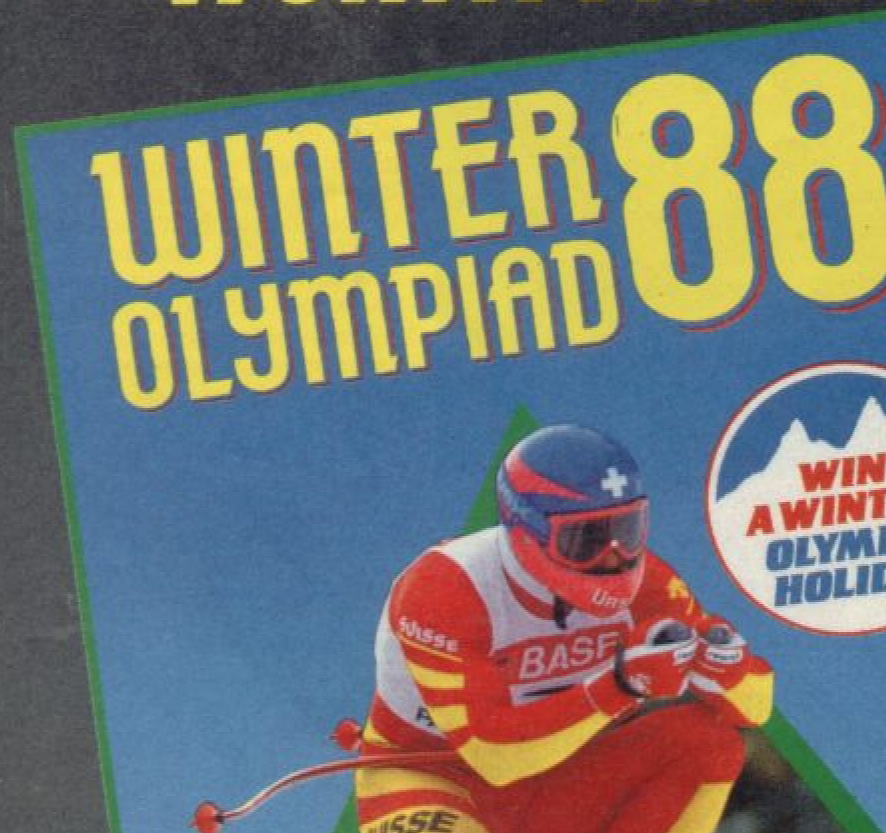
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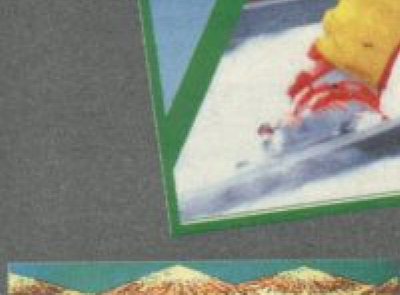


WINTER OLYMPIAD'88

Winter Olympiad '88 is undoubtedly the best winter sports simulation to date. It features the classic winter olympic events; Ski Slalom, Giant Slalom, Two man bob, Ski-Jump, Biathalon and Speed Skating. These have been depicted in a way not seen on any home computer before. The result is a phenomenally realistic and spell-binding game.

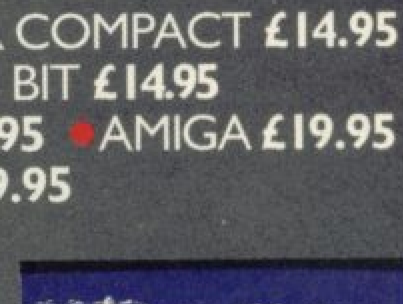
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SURGERY

Sinclair Surgery

Spectrum on the blink? Rupert Goodwins has a cure

A SPECTRUM GONE BAD

I have a five year old Issue two Spectrum, which is showing signs of age. Amongst my peripherals are two Microdrives, a VTX5000 modem and a Saga Emperor keyboard. All the sockets on the back of the computer are badly worn, especially the Mic and 9VDC ones. To get a program to *Load*, I have to press down fairly hard on the Mic lead, and if the power lead is so much as touched the computer crashes.

To add to my problems, the computer sometimes refuses to load some programs on any tape recorder at any setting of volume and tone. Could this be due to the bad connections, or a voltage drop? Is it something I can fix myself with a soldering iron, or should I send the computer off for repair.

Alex King
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands

● *As I've mentioned before, my Spectrum is also a geriatric machine, and I've had similar problems. The tape sockets are most easily fixed by getting a couple of 3.5mm jack sockets from your local Tandy or similar hi fi emporium, soldering a couple of inches of lead to them and then soldering the ends of the leads across the sockets on the Spectrum PCB (printed-circuit board). It is very clear, when you examine the board, which lead goes to which pin of the flying sockets. This simple mod only takes a few minutes, costs less than a pound and works wonders.*

The power supply connection can go wrong in a number of places. Most popular is the socket on the board, but it is not uncommon for the lead to become fractured inside the moulded plug. I've soldered my power supply lead directly to the PCB, but you should only do this if you're sure that you've got the leads the right way round. Otherwise your best bet would be to do the same trick as you did for the tape sockets. Again, Tandy is a good supplier of spare bits.

Finally, your letter seems to indicate that you're Loading *games through the Mic socket. This sometimes works, but the Ear socket is more reliable!*

UPGRADE OR NOT?

I've got an old 48K rubber keyboard Spectrum and a dilemma. I would like to up-grade to a 128K Spectrum, but £250 is a little over the top. This is especially so given the lack of commitment to disc based programs by all the software houses. Now, I'd buy a 128K+2 tomorrow if I could be sure of being able to add a disc drive later, but only if the disc drive was fully compatible with the Amstrad standard.

Is anybody planning to produce such a disc drive?

Steven Clark
Windsor
Berks

● *You will no doubt have read in these very pages that the 128K+3 now costs a paltry £199 smackeroonies, and as such is attracting widespread promises of support from the Oceans of this world.*

However, there are no signs of anyone producing a 128K+2 add-on that's compatible with the Plus 3, and if you do the sums you'll realise that it would have to cost less than seventy quid to be competitive. It's also technically rather tricky to get it right, so the only people who could do it would have to have a lot of money and engineers who knew a lot about Spectra +2 and 3. Might this be a hint?

ALPHACOM 32 GOES BYE BYE

I'm having trouble with my Alphacom 32 printer. It used to work fine with my Spectrum 128. I bought some metallic coated paper which was designed for the Sinclair ZX printer – in the manual it says that this type of paper is unsuitable for the printer but the shop assistant said that the manual was wrong.

When I tried it on my printer, nothing was printed. Now when I use thermal paper nothing is printed properly, and little black things come out with the paper. Help!

Neil Millican
West Derby
Liverpool

● *Waah! You've comprehensibly ruined your Alphacom, as metallic paper is sure and certain death to the thermal print heads. Now this is entirely the fault of the shop assistant, and you can have a go at demanding that they replace or repair your printer. There's nothing you can do by yourself to fix the printer, and I don't know who in this country has any stocks of spare print heads. If I were you, I'd holler at the shop manager pretty hard...*

INCOMPATIBLE SYSTEMS

Recently I bought a '2-colour Citizen printer', which I was told could be linked to my Spectrum 128K+2 via the serial port. Yet none of the names on the pin connections correspond to the names on the Spectrum's RS232 socket. How should I connect it?

Lee Pendleton
Maghall
Liverpool

● *You don't tell me what the number is of the printer, so I can't be absolutely sure how it's interface works. From the information you give me it looks like it isn't an RS232 at all, but rather a synchronous serial link – a system almost but not completely unlike RS232. If this is true, then you won't be able to connect it up to the Spectrum, because the two systems are as incompatible as you could ever wish them to be. Should I be wrong (and it has been known to happen – honest!), then connecting Pin 1 on the printer to Pin 4 on the Spectrum's built in RS232 port, and Pins 2 to 1, and 5 to 3, should do it. If not, try connecting Pin 3 of the printer in place of Pin 1, but I can't hold out more than a 50:50 chance of the whole shebang working*

SPAGETTI JUNCTION

As well as my Spectrum 128 I've got a BBC B with twin Cumana drives and an Electrohome hi-res monitor. I've also got a colour Amstrad PC1512 computer with twin drives. I've just sent away for a Disciple, and I'd like to use one of my existing disc drives and/or monitors with the Spectrum. How can I do this?

D R Nethercott
Severn Beach
Bristol

● *Last time there was a Beeb owner round these parts, we set the Mad Celt on him. Never seen a man move so fast...*

But in a spirit of fraternal niceness, I can reveal that you will be able to use that Electrohome monitor with your Spectrum with only a modicum of lead building. What you'll need to do is knock up an adaptor consisting of an 8-way Din plug, an 8-way Din socket, and a few inches of six-core wire. Make the following connections from the plug to the socket, Pin 2 (plug) to Pin 5 (socket), 3 to 6, 4 to 4, 6 to 2, 7 to 1 and 8 to 3. People who own Amstrad colour CPC monitors will no doubt be interested to know that this will also work for them. You might (depends on your monitor) need to change the wire on Pin 4 of the plug to Pin 5, if you can't make the picture stable. Also, as the Beeb doesn't have a Bright signal, you might have to make up another lead for your monitor to take the signal from Pin 6.

A disc drive from either of your two machines will work with the Disciple, but the Beeb ones might even have the right lead connected to them. You'll need to sort out a power supply, if your local computer store hasn't got one you should be able to leave the disc drive's power lead plugged into the Beeb. This will result in a set-up looking not dissimilar to Frankenstein's bedroom, but which nevertheless works. Depends how brave you are, really...

GET OFF THIS BUS!

I have found when I connect my Spectrum to an Interface 1 with two Microdrives, a Cambridge Computing programmable joystick interface, and a Timex 2040 printer, and then run a large (17K) Basic program it runs for a while and then crashes. This can be cured by removing either the joystick interface or the printer, which leads me to believe that I have some sort of power supply problem.

The voltages are all OK though, and even with everything plugged in are within the limits needed. Could it be bus overload, and can I buy or build a buffer to solve the problem?

I C Purvis
Rugby
Warks

● *Even though the power supply voltages look OK on a meter, it only needs a very short dip of a few microseconds to upset the computer, and with the two devices on at the same time this could be happening. But I think that it's more likely to be bus overload.*

To cure the problem, you need a buffer circuit. As far as I know, nobody makes one for the Spectrum, but they're easy enough to knock up. You'll need one bi-directional octal buffer, and two uni-directional octal buffers, for the data line and the address lines, respectively. Suitable parts are a 74LS245 and 74LS344s. The intricate details of hook-up are beyond this page, but if enough people write in...

PORTABLE POWER

I'm thinking of constructing a computer controlled robot, with my Spectrum riding piggy-back. However, I don't want to use the mains unit to power it, as I don't want any trailing leads.

What's the best kind of portable power supply? I've tried a 9V battery but it doesn't work.

Mark Pickford
Bovey Tracey
Newton Abbot

● *If you get a big enough 9V battery then it will work, but the Spectrum does take around half an amp to get going. This sort of current drain soon renders most batteries as flat as the QL's sales curve, so unless you have shares in Ever Ready I wouldn't recommend using PP9s.*

The answer is rechargeable batteries. There are two types which might be suitable, nickel cadmium (Nicads) and sealed lead-acid cells. These last sort are similar to car batteries – they tend to have a lot of storage but can be heavy and expensive. Nicads are much better, if you buy eight D-size cells they should power your robot for around an hour between charges. You will need a fairly respectable charger, and the whole set will cost quite a bit. But they'll still pay for themselves in about three charges, as opposed to normal batteries. Battery holders can be had, as usual, from your local electronics bits 'n' bobs store

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SOCCER BOSS

SIMULATION Label: **Alternative** Author: **Peaksoft** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **none** Reviewer: **Graham Taylor**

Really awful rival for Football Manager. Don't even think about it!

You want bad? Really bad? You got it. This is crud. It's written in Basic for gawd's sake! It pretends to be like Football Manager but doesn't make it.

It's quite amazingly boring as you have to wait hours for things to happen. So long in fact I thought the program had crashed. If any of you buy this and put it in the charts I'm going to get very upset. If you want a football simulation buy Football Manager, or even wait for Football Manager II, out soon, apparently■

★☆☆☆☆ ☆☆☆☆☆ **1**

ARRGGHHH

ARCADE Label: **Go-It-Alone Software** Price: **£9.99 (Mail Order only)** Author: **Martin White** Joystick: **Keyboard only** Memory: **48K/128K** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Good for fans of Rubik, but for us lesser mortals, a poor investment

Another thing my granny used to say was "If you want to sell a game, then make it simple." Obviously Mr. White has been snooping round my ol' granny's house because this offering from the GIA stable is a very simple idea. You are presented with 6 different coloured rectangles, which are then segmented and mixed up. You have to slide the various segments around and try to piece the colours together again. The game is not easy, far from it. It's hard. Now. I'm not totally thick, but even after 3 hours on level 1, I still hadn't finished it.

GIA has a very good concept on its hands here. If only it had taken just a little more care over the front end and screen presentation■

★★☆☆☆ ★☆☆☆☆ **3**

HIT PAK VOLUME 2

COMPILATION Label: **Elite** Authors: **various** Price: **£9.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon**

Maintaining the reputation laid down by the first Elites First 6-Pak. A quality compilation

Nowadays, compilations are getting better and better as more and more recent games are being incorporated. This latest offering from Elite kicks off well. Into the Eagles Nest, is a graphically excellent Gauntlet clone. Then there's Lightforce a really neat vertically scrolling shoot-em-up with no colour clash! Then things deteriorate a bit. Aces is a not so good flight simulator over troubled areas, International Karate has been on other compilations and it's not a brilliant combat game, and Shocking Rider – mugging on express pathways though a neat idea is a bit odd. Finally, there's Batty. Previously unreleased and arguably the highlight of the tape ... Arkanoid, take a step back. It's really good. So three great games, and three maybe OKs. It's a great compilation and one well worth spending your hard earned shreddies on■

★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **8**

WAR CARS

ARCADE Label: **Firebird** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **various** Reviewer: **Jim Douglas**

Slot-car racing comes to your Spectrum. Acceptable though crowded graphics improve an essentially dull idea

Not being particularly excited by 'real' slot car racing, I had to make a special effort in order to look at War Cars with an impartial eye. I really wish I hadn't bothered.

War Cars (originally titled Car Wars, then changed for reasons best known only to Firebird and the licencees of other games or films no doubt) has two elements. There's the race, where you and a drone car hammer (well, pootle really) around a circuit, collecting flags for points and getting lost. The other bit is the Construction Set, where you can design your own racetrack. Just like Virgin's Scalextric really. It's all fairly harmless although immensely boring. There's nothing at all to retain the interest of anyone except the most avid slot-racing fan. Think of all the other things you could spend three quid on■

★★★☆☆ ★★☆☆☆ **5**

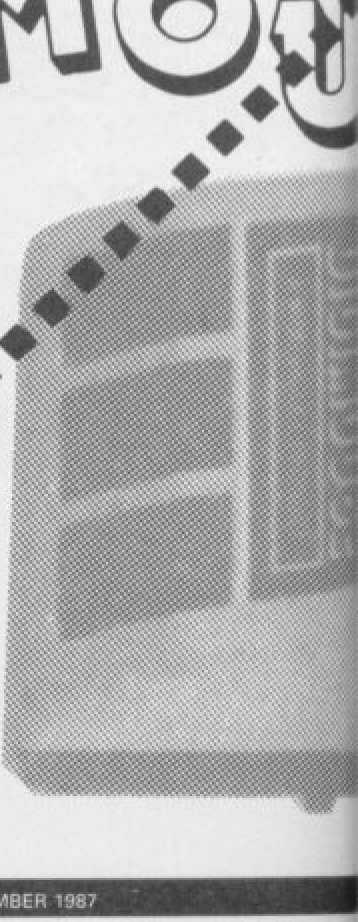
SINCLAIR user

YUK YUK



SPEC

MO





YUK! YUK! YUK!

COMPETITION



If you like horrible things, this is the compo for you! Soft and Cuddly from the Power House is definitely the most disgusting game we've seen in ages. Poor souls being stretched on the rack, decapitated decomposing heads jumping up out of the floor at you, and sheep doing peculiar things. Such depravity deserves recognition. And so, with questionable wisdom, we dredge up the great SU 'Isn't This A Horrible Competition Competition!'

And what sort of prize could we give away that would be apt and fitting for such a truly stomach-churning game? Well, it's not so much a prize as an experience. The First Prize Winner will win a day in the company of Power House. You'll be wined, dined and generally looked after. And then we'll take you to the London Dungeon, easily the most spooky place in the country (except perhaps, for the late John Gilbert's secret SU cubbyhole).

You can creep around, check out the gruesome exhibits and see all manner of thoroughly unpleasant fates befalling poor saps who forgot to pay their TV licence in the old days, and when you've been totally spoiled by the people from Power House – who aren't actually too terrible after all – we'll weigh you down with a goody-bag full of games, posters, T-shirts et al.

But there's more:
Thirty second prize winners get copies of Soft and Cuddly (reviewed last issue) with which to scare impressionable parents.

Finally thirty, third prize winners will get Soft and Cuddly posters. Yuk. And if that's not enough to make you go a-snipping away at the coupon, you can just go watch Brookside instead.

Hard challenging bit:

Right. The Questions: Here they are. No more waiting. Let's go. Here they come now:

1) What is the Number of the Beast
2) Name the author of Soft and Cuddly
3) (Tie-breaker) What's the most horrible thing you can think of?

Send your answers along with as large a sum of money as you can spare* to: 'The Sinclair User Going Away On Holiday, Oh Alright It's the Soft and Cuddly Compo, Actually Competition', Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough P62 0UF.

*Not necessarily.

1)..

2)..

3)..

....

Name: ....

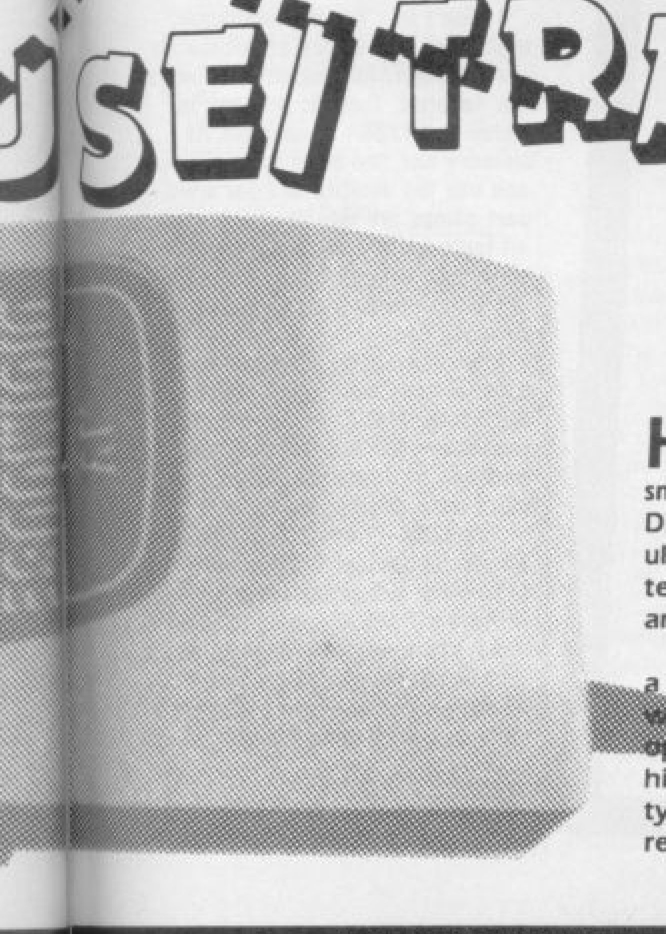
Address: ....

....

Competition closes 30th November 1987 and isn't open to EMAP or Power House people who are already quite horrible enough

(SPE)CIAL OFFER

(MO)USE/TRACKER BALL..



Have we got a load of balls for you! These balls are sitting all shiny smooth and ergonomic at the heart of the Digimouse a totally wonderful high quality ultra sophisticated personal computer interface equally suitable for quite serious and not at all serious things.

The Digimouse is robustly designed, with a smooth tracker ball action and will work with any software that has a joystick option. A switch lets you choose between high speed and slow speed for fast gamesy type things and detailed arty type things respectively.

THE PACKAGE

For your money (yeah we'll get to how much in a minute) you get the Digimouse, suitable interface for Spectrum and Grafix design software package.

GRAFIX

A powerful art package with sophisticated features for drawing, filling, and magnifying detail for fine work. Text can be incorporated on to the design and when completed the whole thing can be saved on tape or Microdrive.

THE FOLDING GREEN STUFF

All this total wonderfulness costs a mere £39.95 – considerably less than other mouse systems and has been specifically designed to be suitable for a wide range of games.

Coupon

I would like to order .... Nidd Valley Digimouse sets at £39.95 each. I enclose a cheque – made payable to EMAP for £........

My Name..

Address ....

....

....

Now cut out the coupon and send it along with your cheque to: Mouse Offer, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Please allow 28 days for delivery. Offer closes Dec 31, 1987.

THE PLUS 3 DISC SOLUTION?

Solving the 128K+3's software shortage. Is Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 *the* essential Plus 3 add-on? Rupert Goodwins gives his verdict . . .

In the beginning there was the Spectrum. Lots of people bought one. Lots of other people wrote games for the Spectrum, and lots of people bought those as well.

But there was a snag – everything used cassette tapes, which were fine for *Depeche Mode* but not for so hot for computer software. Slow, unreliable and frustrating were some of the kinder terms used for the medium.

Then came the Microdrive, Wafadrive and (for the fortunate few) disc drives. Wonderful things all – fast, reliable and capacious. Just the thing. Except for the one anchovy in the pizza – how do you get all the games from tape to their new home? Cue Multiface from Romantic Robot.

Multiface was revolutionary. With the press of a button, anything could be dumped to Microdrive or disc. And as the Spectrum evolved from 48K chocolate bar to 128K Amstrad, new versions of Multiface were produced.

Now there's the 128K+3, a games machine that has all its software on tape and built in disc drive . . . Guess what Romantic Robot has produced?

Multiface 3, that's what. Plug it into your 128K+3, and load a game from tape. Press the red button and you can port it on to disc at any stage, yours to load in a trice at a whim's notice. Multiface works by waiting for the program to load and run. Then it takes a copy, and as the program was running at the time, it will run when the copy is loaded back later.

Software houses are stuffy about this – they can see games being copied and distributed by pirates (but not of course by any SU reader) with a consequent impoverishment of the programmers.

Romatic Robot is sensitive to this, and claims that any program saved using a Multiface 3 will only load back with the machine attached.

That said, if you're a Plus 3 owner the only way you'll get your software on disc is via the Multiface.

The tape to disc function of the Multiface 3 would be enough to recommend it to anyone. But there's more. When the red button is pressed, a whole range of functions appears. You can look through the 128K+3's memory, altering it at will. High scores have never been so easy to obtain. Memory can be displayed as hexadecimal, decimal or text. All of the 128K+3's 128K of Ram can be fiddled with, not just the 48K's worth that Basic has access to.

You can also print out areas of memory and screens in a variety of different forms. The Multiface 3 can do the same types of graphics dumps as its brother Multiprint, straight text, Spectrum-style *Copy* and a couple of shaded screen dumps. It can't do much more than 128K+3 Basic does, but it does it in the middle of programs.

The main purpose of the Multiface is to get things on to disc. As well as the simple *Save* and *Load*, it's got a few other tricks up its interface. You can, for example, use the disc from 48K mode. Lots of people get excited by this. Unlike the Spectrum 128K and 128K+2, the 128K+3 allows you to go into 48K mode without fatally locking out all of the new features. You do this by typing SPECTRUM in Plus 3 Basic, and you have a 48K Spectrum that, with Multiface, can use the disc drive.

Other things that the Multiface can do is allow you to erase a file to make room on a disc, in case you need to save something in mid-game and can't get to Basic to do the deed. You can't *Format* a disc from the Multiface, alas.

Multiface also compresses stuff automatically, and doesn't *Save* empty areas of memory. These two features mean that you can get (for example) more than three games on the 170-odd K allowed you per disc side. But you can turn those features off, if need be.

Everything is accessed by the traditional one- or two-line menu and single keypresses. Multiface 3 is very careful about invalid inputs, and didn't crash or otherwise misbehave at all. And I did try to confuse it.

I didn't like the manual much; eight half-size pages of dot-matrix isn't enough. All the major subjects are covered, though: the way in which the 128K+3 manages its memory and the ways in which you can use the Multiface 3 for multi-part games are mentioned. It's all a bit terse and dense. If the Multiface wasn't so easy to use the manual might have been a problem, but it is, so it isn't.

More than that, what can I say? I enjoy a good rant, most reviewers do, but the Multiface 3 seems set on continuing the Romantic Robot tradition of doing the job reliably. I can't even complain a little.

Any 128K+3 owner will find it a wonderful device, indispensible even – I'm not giving mine back without a fight. I expect to see the usual extra programs appear for the best in due course (Genie et al), whereupon not owning a Multiface 3 will brand one a complete loser■



Price: £49.95

Rupert Goodwins

HIGH FRONTIER

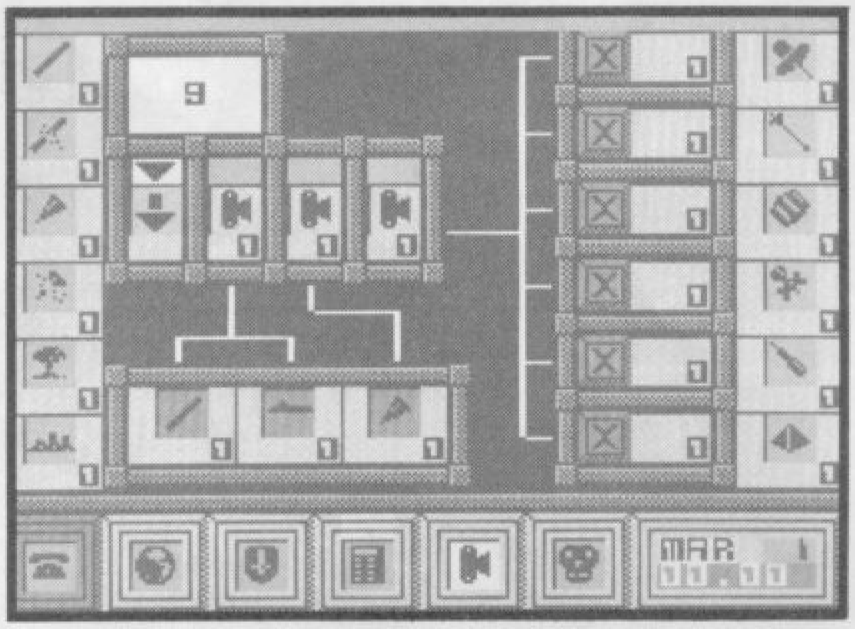
STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

High Frontier is a complex and fascinating simulation of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, otherwise known and loved as Star Wars.

The idea of SDI is that once perfected, a series of laser satellites and inertial weapons satellites will be able to pick off incoming missiles and so preserve truth, justice and the American way.

The likelihood that the rest of the world is going to be a pile of radioactive slag doesn't seem to worry the Pentagon much.

Enough of politics, Activision, which publishes **High Frontier,** has called it a wargame. It isn't, it's a joystick-controlled





strategy game. An even more accurate description might be business management game for participants in the arms race!

You are in charge of the development and eventual use of the American SDI system. Your task is to juggle the various resources in men, money and materials that you have at your disposal, to create the best and most effective system you can. How well you have succeeded will become obvious after the most acid test of all – World War III.

There are a number of different screens which can be accessed, and all except one have a common border of control icons.

The R&D screen is the one you tend to use most in the early stages of the game. You can commit manpower and monetary resources to developing up to six different SDI systems – laser satellites, X-ray laser satellites, 'rail' guns, which use electro-magnetic pulses to fire chunks of metal, Satellite Launched Attack Missiles (SLAMS) which are like mini-rockets with lasers on board, space planes, a cross between the space shuttle and a jet fighter, and a battle management system which basically acts as an anti-ballistic missile screen.

Each of the different systems have different capabilities. Some are better agains missiles than against warheads, some work best in deep space, others within the atmosphere, and so on. You'll not be able to develop all six systems at the same time, so you have to start making the difficult decisions right from the start.

The SDI screen is for controlling systems which you have built using the R&D screen. You can use espionage and reconnaisance to find our what the Soviets are up to. The threat screen gives you some idea of the state of 'international tension' and if the worst happens, and war starts, then you'll be treated to a nice little graphics sequence showing little dots bleeping across the world. These are nuclear missiles, and you'd better start hoping that your systems are going to hold them off. The president will ask you whether you think you can stop bombs from falling on America; if you give the answer no, then he will launch the US counterstrike.

Unlike some games, where everybody loses once nuclear war has started, **High Frontier** is based on the idea that a nuclear war could be survivable. Your success at creating an efficient SDI system will decide how much of America has survived, and so your final score. A very dubious assumption, I'd have thought. The idea of anyone thinking conflict is acceptable is pretty frightening.

If you get tired of playing around with icons, then you can have a go at the arcade sequence which is built into the game. This lets you control one of the various types of weapons systems you have in orbit. You get a view from your satellite, just as the Russian missiles are launched. This is your chance to save a little bit more of America for posterity and it's an absolutely straight arcade zap in which you try to knock out as many missiles as possible. It may all seem complicated but **High Frontier** is actually quite simple to play once you've had a couple of tries, although not easy to win, not at first, anyway.

I'm not sure that I can say that I enjoyed **High Frontier,** the whole thing is a touch tasteless but it certainly had a sort of compulsive fascination. I have to admit that I was hooked■



FACTS BOX

Compulsive strategic simulation of the Star Wars defence system. Get it right and you save America. Is it worth it?

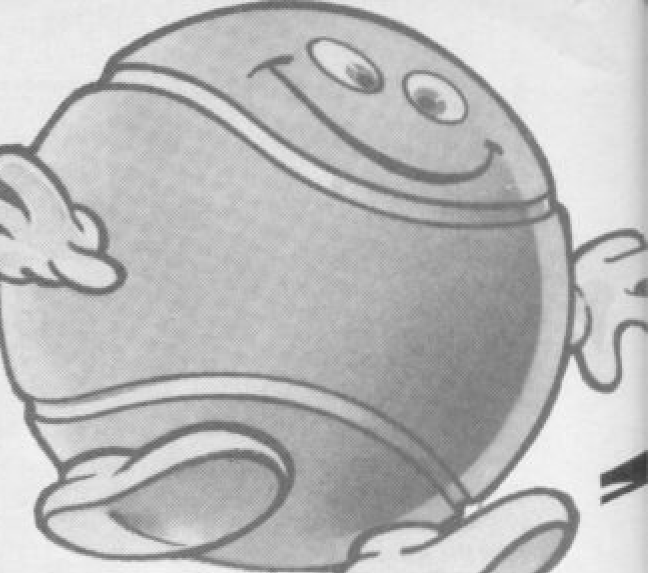
HIGH FRONTIER
Label: Activision
Author: Alan Steel
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various
Price: £9.99

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆ **8**

IF you reckon we're talking rubbish don't just stand there . . .
Tell us what you
Stick your comments on paper, fill in and cut out the coupon below and send it in . . .
And if you don't send us your picture – the sillier the better – we'll have to print a picture of a slug





Starwreck Alternative

Well done Alternative with Starwreck. Unlike you (!) I think this adventure is great – taking the mick out of *Star Trek* even down to the enemy. The graphics are OK and the vocabulary is good. The jokes are also canny, try talking to Mr Checkout and Mr Zulu to find out what happens. It's well worth £1.99 and I think it's a good deal better than some of the more expensive adventures around at the moment■

Shane Wood
Co Durham
Game Choice:
Tai-Pan



Feud Bulldog

Wow! What ace graphics. What a totally original idea. What a game – trudging around a screen for 17 hours until somebody dies of exhaustion or old age. What fun – well worth two pence at the most. Don't get it unless you have a spare lifetime to kill. I finished it second time I played it but one game should be enough for anyone■

Elliot Owens
Kidderminster
Game Choice:
Prohibition

PS Well, you said to tell it straight.
PPS Hello Mom.
PPPS That's it

● *We agree. If you're into wizardy games, it's great. Otherwise, it's fairly dull*

Zynaps Hewson

Well done again SU. Once more you give a totally brilliant review. I am of course referring to Zynaps. What a totally amazing game it is. A new award ought to be invented for such games. The sound has some pleasant spot FX and a brilliant title tune as well. The colour is some of the best I have ever seen and the play is fast-moving and difficult. I must have gone back for just-one-more-go thousands of times and I still haven't got on to the fourth part of the game. I have completed it with a *Poke* and was disappointed to find no 'well done'. You just start at the beginning again.

This standard of game is becoming normal for Hewson, what with Impossiball, Gunrunner (which I found good), Zynaps and now Exolon. This is the sort of review I buy SU for. Well done■

Charles Underwood
Kenley, Surrey
Game Choice:
Gauntlet

Zynaps Hewson

You were right!!! Zynaps is great. Even if you've got a billion other games like this it's still a must and is the ultimate in shoot 'em ups. The graphics are colourful, very, very smooth, yet very fast. I loved the way the aliens wizzed round the screen. When you build up your weapons with missiles, bombs and lasers the screen is just one swirling mass of death and destruction. The sound is also good with great explosion FX. This is the most addictive, challenging and technically stunning shoot 'em up for ages and deserves the SU classic you gave it. With hundreds of screens this should keep you gong for ages■

Robert Platun
Southwick,
W Sussex
Game Choice:
Exolon

● *Yes, yes, yes, we know, it's good!!*

Zynaps Hewson

Spot on SU. What a terrific game Zynaps is, it is the best shoot 'em up I've played since Light Force.

The graphics are excellent especially the explosions. I can't wait to play Hewson's new game Exolon■

Mark Sidowra
Dundee
Game Choice:
Exolon

● *All right, that's enough praise for* Zynaps.

Zynaps Hewson

Having just read the Zynaps review in the July issue I felt I had to buy it. So on went my jacket and down to the local software store.

Wow what graphics! Has my Spectrum turned into a C64? What music – ten stars and a classic just wasn't enough! Everybody should buy this game, it's essential■

Steve Kidd
Ivybridge,
South Devon
Game Choice:
Exolon

● *We know, that's what said!*

Game Over Imagine

The recent licensing deal that Imagine and Dinamic have made means a whole new variety of fab games such as After the War and Freddy Hardest. The first of these games is Game Over, and what a cracker this is. Just who is this Tamara person? Don't let her review anything else!!

The gameplay in this game is superb and it should have been a classic■

Andrew Pinch
Clitheroe, Lancs
Game Choice:
Road Runner



●*Tamara says: Well I didn't like it, and I'm gonna keep on reviewing wever you like it or n*

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Living Daylights Domark

Were you drunk when you reviewed Living Daylights? You must have been a bit tipsy to give it . . . shock, horror . . . seven stars!!

Out of ten this 'game' is worth a maximum of two, and that's being generous! I admit the graphics are good, but the game is so flippin' ridiculous.

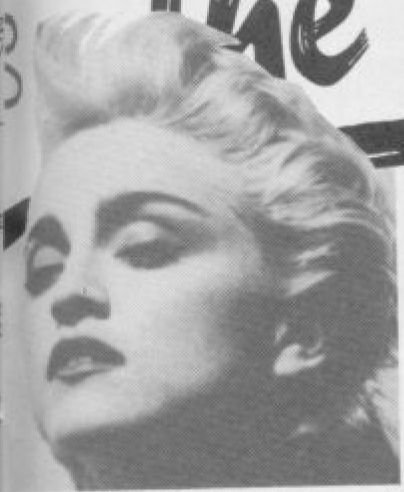
You start running, and before you know it, your energy is down to 50 per cent. So you stop to fight back, but because your paint gun's useless, you change it to your normal gun. By this time you're sort of . . . dead.

If you're lucky enough to get to the end of the level, you'll need X-ray specs to work out where the sniper is!! Save the eight quid and spend it on something playable■

Ryan Halley
Leicester
Game Choice:
Exolon

● *Graham says: Yes I was drunk but don't tell anyone*

The WRITE STUFF?!



Game Over
Imagine

Oh dear, I should have waited . . .

Game Over looked wicked in the small piccies (Aug. SU) – and coupled with the rather naughty advertisement (ooer) I rushed out to buy it.

It's pretty useless really isn't it?!! I'd like this letter to be printed so potential Game Over buyers will resist the urge – because Mr Attribute Clash must not go platinum (or I'll set that bear on you!)■

Rob Constance
Cornwall

PS I love Madonna so if you print a huge piccie of her I'll buy October's issue TWICE!! (Extortion). And I'll spread the gospel of SU at my college! (Creep, creep, more extortion!!!)

Game Choice:
Exolon

Livingstone, I Presume
Aligator

Only eight stars!!! Is Tamara Howard stark raving mad? Where's the Classic? This game is *fabulous*. Cute little comic graphics and fantasitically fun to play■

Adam Kitson
Upperthong

Game Choice:
The Sentinel

● *Tamara is utterly off her rocker anyway, though she didn't think it was worth the classic*



Bombjack II
Elite

How could you call Bombjack II a terrific sequel? This game is terrible! For a start you are controlling a different character. (Well, so it seems – where's his cloak and hat?). Then, when you go to knife a monster to death, it disappears! Colour clash has not been dealt with very well either. Sometimes during play, Bombjack is lost within the background. Ten stars!!! Sorry, the best that I would give this game was six. Don't buy Bombjack II unless you don't have the original 'cos that's the only good thing about this package■

Hal Maughan
Thetford

Game Choice:
Exolon

Wonderboy
Activision

What an excellent conversion Wonderboy is, it must be the best conversion ever and already my favourite game of the year. All the arcade features are there and some really fantastic graphics on later levels.

But where is the Classic? I couldn't find it anywhere. OK, so you get a slight flicker every now and then but it doesn't matter because the game is totally brilliant, even the sound throughout is quite good. If you've got nine quid to spare buy Wonderboy. You won't regret it. It's all you could ever want in a game and more■

Andrew Webster
Hull

Game Choice:
Indiana Jones

● *We're glad you liked it, but we felt Wonderboy just fell a bit short of classic status*

Living Daylights
Domark

Seven stars? SEVEN STARS! I wasted my money! Of the eight levels only one showed any sign of thought. And level five? I've seen more originality in Pac-Man. The sound is great, but let down by the dull graphics and naff gameplay. If ploughing your way through hordes of second-rate sprites who hurl everything but the kitchen sink at you, with minor variations, for seven levels and blasting balloons on another Level 5 is your idea of stunning enjoyment, then buy this. I'd give it four stars out of pity■

Glenn Harris
Country Durham

Game Choice:
Yankee



Ghosthunters
Codemasters

Breaking the sound barrier home on my bike with my copy of Ghosthunters, I rushed up stairs and slapped it into my Plus 2. Yuk! What a let down!! Substandard graphics and some stamma blerts out 'Ghostbusters' every time you collect more macho potion. To top all that I find the game completely impossible. Oh dear you have really let yourself down Codemasters. How about some more quality games such as BMX Simulator? And how could you give it the eight stars?

Take my advice pay one quid more and get Feud. There's no comparison■

Nicholas Flood
Wilmslow,
Cheshire

Game Choice:
Prohibition

PS Jon Riglar is ACE

●*Go away Jon*

Barbarian
Palace

Thrust, chop, slash. Ha! Eat dirt, scum bag!! That's Barbarian from Palace – its best release ever. The game has really good touches such as the bit where you use a neck chop and watch your opponent's head fly across the screen and the little goblin?!? kicks the head back again as it drags your opponent's body off the screen. The computer is difficult to beat (it's nice to see an opponent with brains) except, of course, in the code submitted by lovely Mr Singh■

Shaun Hole
Exeter, Devon

Game Choice:
Quartet

PS Jon Riglar is fab, so lay off.

PPS Your mag is fab too (cringe, creep).

PPPS Now can I have £10

● *Oh all right, here's yer ten quid, now push off*

Prohibition Infogrames

Now, I'm gonna take this very calmly . . . WHAT THE *!!?? are you talking about giving this game eight stars. The graphics are very good, but that's about it. Sound, where is it? I quite liked the arcade version, but the Spectrum version has lost it's playability. Alright for the first few games, but it soon gets boring. So if you are really a Prohibition freak, you're in for a very nasty shock■

Ian Parr
Surrey

Game Choice:
Stainless Steel

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Wonder Boy
Activision

I am fuming! After reading your review of Wonder Boy, in August's SU, I leap up and rattled £10 out of my piggy bank. I rushed out and got the game.

Was I in for a shock, or was I in for a shock?? Oh boy, what a load of rubbish. Its stupid one-colour graphics and load-again-every-five-minutes made the game as interesting as watching paint dry. Come on SU, how can Wonder Boy get 8 stars? It doesn't deserve 3!!!■

Michael McCarron
Hackney
London

Game Choice:
Arkanoid

Exolon
Hewson

I thought that Jim Douglas was spot on with his review of Exolon. It looks good, it plays good and it certainly is good. You control a spaceman, armed with a gun and a rocket launcher strapped to your back. You must cross an alien landscape, encountering aliens, obstacles and mines, even giant hammers that erupt from the ground. There are also extra bullets and rockets to be picked up.

The way the rockets are launched is terrific, and the graphics are brill. At £8.95 its a must for Speccy owners■

Tim Hatch
Hessle Road Hull

Game Choice:
World Games

Every so often — well very often actually — you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

Enough is enough. We can't take any more, if you think you're so clever you write the damn magazine. We mean it!

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*** Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

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DESTINATION:UNKNOWN DATE:UNKNOWN

SU :OUT NOVEMBER 18th (WE HOPE)



ON THE RAMPAGE!

If you've ever wanted to be a gorilla or a dinosaur – and we all have at one time or another haven't we? – then now's your chance with Rampage being converted by Activision from the coin-op of the same name.

Here's some early screens. Tear down those buildings, rip up those motorcars and push your mates off the skyscrapers. Can't wait!

Streetdate: November.
Price: £9.95





BOBBY SLEIGHS 'EM

Yes, we previewed it a coupla months ago, but DI's Bobsleigh is now almost finished, and the screen shots look like this...

Streetdate: November.
Price: £9.95



GRYZOR COIN-OP CONVERT PROGRESSES

Gryzor is really nearly finished and, just to prove it, Ocean has given us these screenshots. If you're a bit confused by the fact that it looks like a completely different game to the one we showed you the other month, don't be. That shot was of the indoor scenes – the mini-game sort of thing. These pix are of the main section.

You – a psychotic combat machine (typecast again) – have got to make your way as far right across the play area as possible, saying a friendly 'adios' to anyone who gets in the way of your laser cannon. Incidentally, the coding has been undertaken by the same guys who wrote Cobra, though Gryzor will be 'faster'.

Just like the arcade game, you can employ sneaky tactics like diving down into the shoulder-height water, letting a bad guy walk above you on a walkway and then pointing your weapon skywards and shooting the poor sap in the soles of his feet.

Yup. We can't wait to get our mitts on it.

Streetdate: November.
Price: £7.95

MADNESS MANSELL



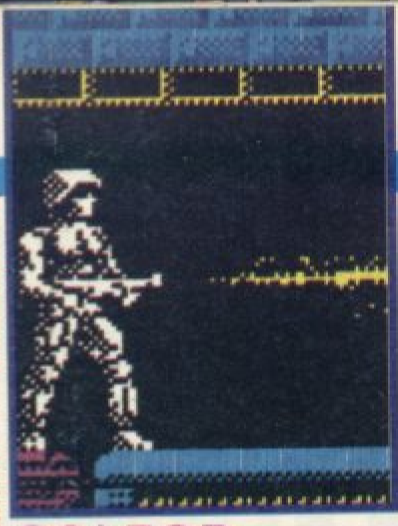


Will Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix be the first really great car racing game on the Spectrum?

Martech is promising great things, (including that Mansell will win the championship which, at the time of writing, looks seriously dodgy). Supposedly the game has complexity for those who like to take their simulations seriously but can be played at a simple level for those who just want to wizz around the track at high speed.

The game features every track that Mansell won, placed or broke down on in 1987, full and authentic cockpit detail in the car giving you precise information about its current status. A winner? Don't know. Screen shot looks so-so I'd say. And it's up against Out-Run in the battle for sales, too. But then it's not finished yet. . .

Streetdate: November.
Price: £9.99



GO! FOR TRANTOR

Finally! Here's a look at Trantor, the last Stormtrooper **from Go! Software, new label from US Gold. Anyway, it's been programmed by the seriously talented people of Probe** (Solomon's Key **among other things) and has finally managed to make it's way to these hallowed pages.**

Trantor **has been left fairly squarely in the lurch by his mates. They sent him off to a real fag-end of a planet, telling him that he's got to complete a mission of some description, and then they leave him there. And, then his ship explodes into a million bits as soon as he leaves it.**

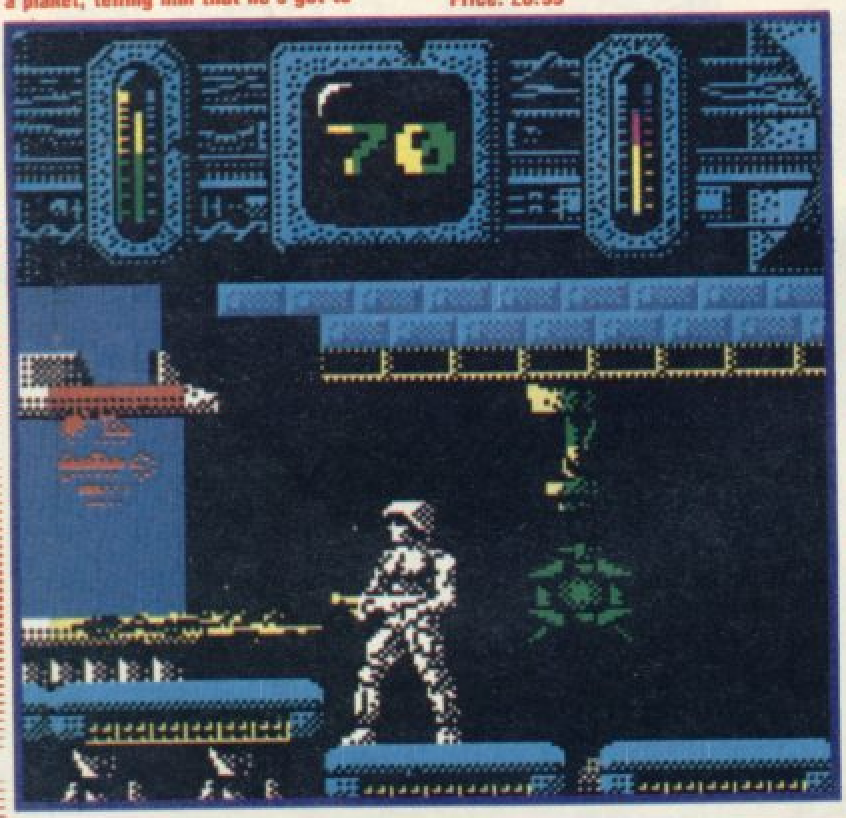
Escape thus becomes the order of the day, and you have to run around hundreds of corridors, going deeper and deeper into the planet, until you eventually find enough code letters. Code letters? Yes. There's a big transporter thing, you see, at the end of the game, and once you have collected together the correct code, you can punch it into the computer and you'll be teleported off.

The graphics are fairly amazing, I think you'll agree. The animation of the central figure – quite a big sprite – is actually very well done indeed.

As well as simply haring along passages, burning anything that gets in your way to a cinder, you've got to investigate lockers, terminals and other items in order to find useful objects like a time capsule or some more ammo for your flame thrower.

It's looking good.

Streetdate: October.
Price: £8.99



MORE X . . .



Now Agent X **from Mastertronic was a pretty successful game. Ordinarily this would mean that it would be followed up with a sequel of outstanding cruddyness but it could be that** Agent X II **is actually going to be a goodie.**

The mad professor from Agent X **part one is back, this time trying to ruin the world economy by giving everybody spots and forcing them to spend their money on skin care**

DEFLECTOR REBOUNDS

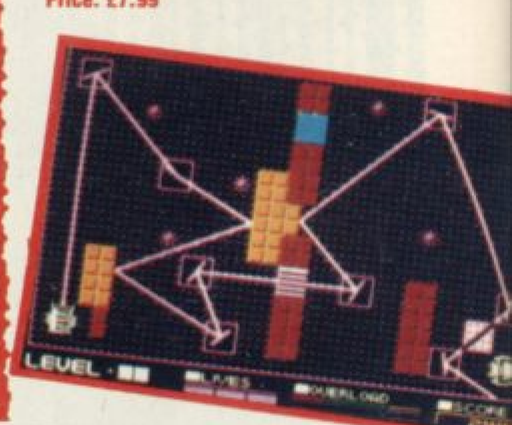
More mathematical theorems, strange angles and the odd laser beam, in a game which is going to be *so* unlike Virgin's Rebel **that I daresay you're wondering why I even bothered to mention the name at all.**

So am I actually. Deflektor **– hot out of Gremlin's laserium – promises no nasties to destroy, just a bit of twizzling the old laser beam in order to twiddle the receiver and open the path to the next level.**

All in all there are going to be some sixty levels (at least 54 more than Rebel **– told you they weren't alike!) and I should say that it's going to take pretty smart young people to crack their way through all of them and qualify for Riglar's high-score tables.**

Lots of nice objects to get in the way and thwart your plans (check out the screen shot), so Gremlin recommends that you be thoroughly prepared to admit defeat.

Streetdate: December.
Price: £7.99









COMBAT RANGE

More progression on Ocean's Combat School. **Here we have the *Firing Range* section, where the players have to now down paper targets in order to prepare themselves for wallowing around in a trench up to their waists in water and corpses. There's no getting away from the fact that it looks like a pretty good game.**

Streetdate: November.
Price: £7.95



creams. Spotless Agent X is the superhero called in to defeat this darstardly plan. As you would expect from any self-respecting budget arcade game this involves lots and lots of sprites that bounce up and down on a varicty of alien landscapes. Expect to see this one disappearing from garages, video shops and supermarkets in absolute droves.

Streetdate: November.
Price £1.99

PREVIEW

FLYING TO SIM CITY



Phooer, Simulation City! Digital Integration has been keeping Advance Tactical Fighter pretty close to its chest, and with good reason I believe.

This ain't no ordinary dull simmie. Ve boize at DI have come up with a game that will combine elements of strategy (like fuelling). And it's going to be very nice. Looking down on your craft, you'll zoom around the 3D generated landscape no problem, it's looking mighty realistic, and I've got high hopes for this one.

Streetdate: December.
Price: to be confirmed

NOW JOIN THE PHANTOM CLUB



What's all this then? Well, it's Ocean's big under-wraps project for Xmas, and it's called Phantom Club.

Hang on a second. Those graphics look a little familiar. That 3D style that isn't quite Ultimate. There's a bit more restraint, and everything looks crisper. Yes. It's Movie time again. After an unbearable silence of around a year and a half, the man who brought you the SU Classic detective thriller game, Movie, is back with a follow-up that looks set to offer better graphics, very surreal elements and gameplay of a speed never seen in a 3D game before.

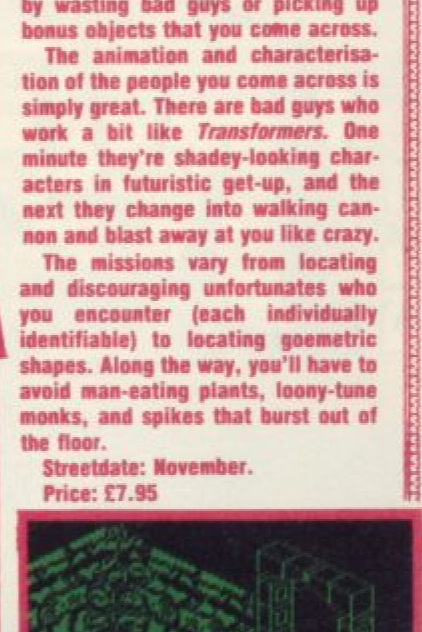
The plot of Phanton Club is largely unclear, owing to the fact that the programmer is Yugoslavian and Ocean hasn't quite managed to understand exactly why you – a superbly animated character – are in what can only be described as a very odd world.

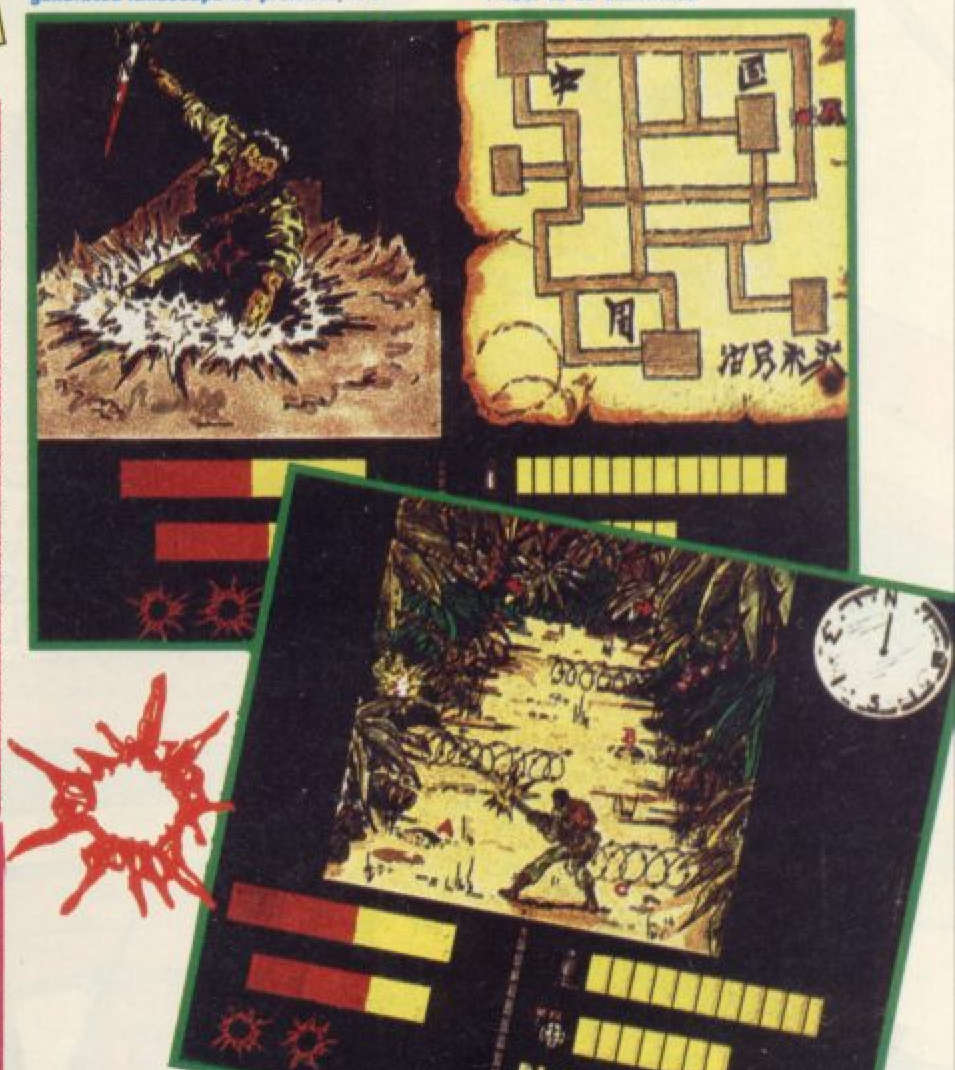
The aim of the game, it appears, is to complete eight increasingly difficult missions. No missions can be attempted unless you have notched up enough points. Points are scored by wasting bad guys or picking up bonus objects that you come across.

The animation and characterisation of the people you come across is simply great. There are bad guys who work a bit like *Transformers*. One minute they're shadey-looking characters in futuristic get-up, and the next they change into walking cannon and blast away at you like crazy.

The missions vary from locating and discouraging unfortunates who you encounter (each individually identifiable) to locating goemetric shapes. Along the way, you'll have to avoid man-eating plants, loony-tune monks, and spikes that burst out of the floor.

Streetdate: November.
Price: £7.95





HERE'S PLATOON

Shhhh. Don't tell anyone where you got them, but here are a couple of storyboards from Platoon. Obtained from Ocean H.Q. during a daring covert operation, headed up by S.U.P.E.R. (Sinclair User Previews Expert Regiment) – they show the sort of thing that you'll be getting up to when the game of the film comes out around Xmas.

The boards here show the third and final sections. In Part 3, you find yourself wading around up to your knees in liquid guk in the Viet-cong tunnels beneath a village. Everything seems to be going fine until you round a blind corner to be pounced upon by a v.c. commando. The tunnels lead to rooms, as well as a lot of dead ends. The rooms contain useful objects like radios and stores, all of which can be examined and looted. Finally, you'll emerge into daylight and will go on to another section.

The final stage places you in a sticky situation in the jungle. You've got to find Sgt Barnes (who, if you remember from the film, goes utterly barmy) and subdue him somewhat. He's got himself holed up in a bunker at the top of the screen and you've got to work your way up, through barbed wire, mines and the v.c. onslaught and bombard his bunker with five grenades. If you take too long your own ever-reliable airborne forces just might come along and napalm the forest.

Other sections of the game involve a second bunker, this time inhabited by enemy troops. You'll have to try and pick them off at night, but sending up one of your limited supply of flares, illuminating the area and aiming in the short spell of visibility. Then there's a standard jungle warfare affair, with left-right scrolling

From the storyboards, it looks promising, but it's still got a way to go before it's a playable game.

Streetdate: Christmas.
Price: £7.95

DUTCH THUNDERCEPTOR

Now here's something you don't see every day. It's Thunderceptor, and it's just about to be released on the Go! label. It's one of the fastest trad shoot 'em ups we've seen for ages.

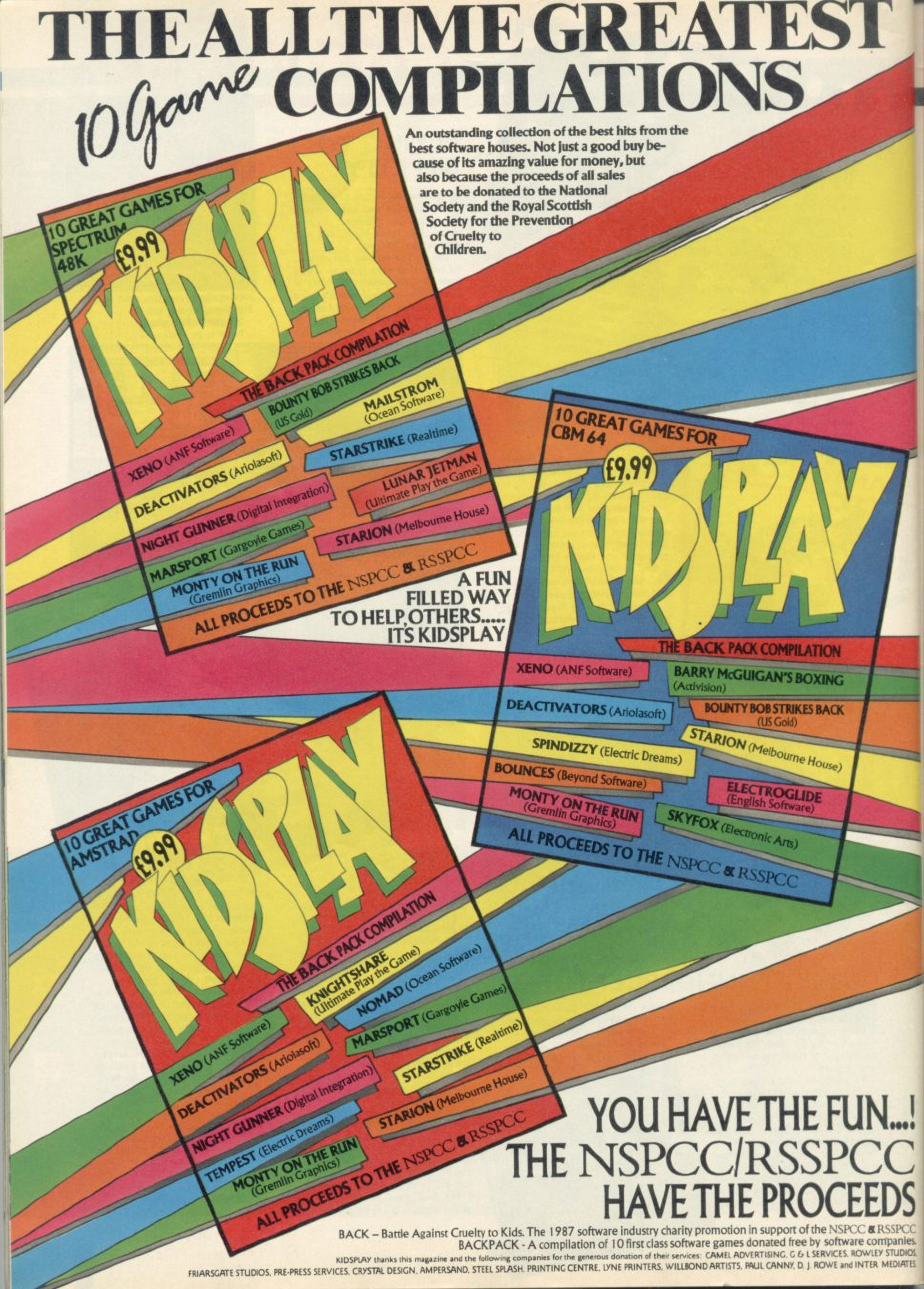
It's one of two titles being programmed by a Dutch firm called Ernieware Productions. Don't scoff.

The other game – Fast and Furious (not pictured here) – seems to involve *extremely* similar elements to Thunderceptor, except that instead of flying your interplanetary superspace fighter while combatting oncoming alien ships, dodging meteors and scrolling left to right, you are flying a carpet while combatting oncoming enemy armed rugs, dodging pillars and scrolling left to right.

Funny old business, this, isn't it?

Streetdate: to be confirmed.
Price: to be confirmed




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PREVIEW IS COMPILED BY JIM DOUGLAS

MASK AGAIN

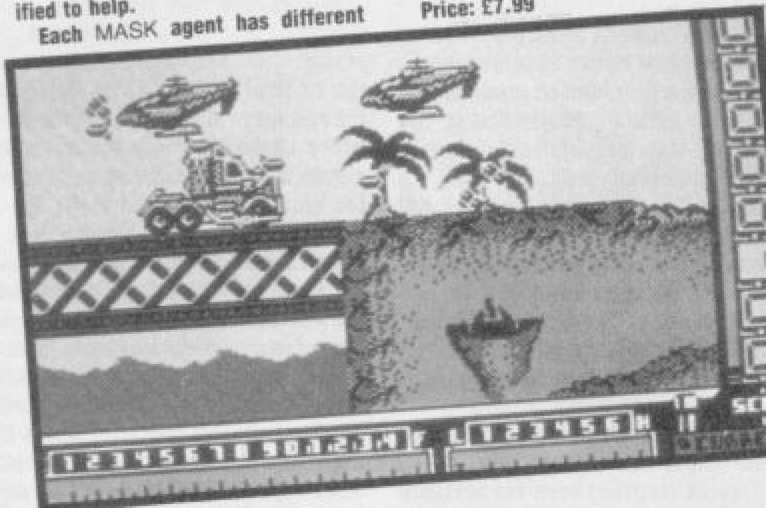
We like MASK. Well, I did anyway. Gremlin obviously thought so too because it's going to do it again.

Yup. MASK II is on the way, and it's going to be even better than the last MASK. This time around, there are four separate missions for Matt (he of the cleft chin) to deal with, and there's also a special first section which involves choosing which of the MASK agents are best qualified to help.

Each MASK agent has different strengths and weaknesses, each one also has a different mode of transport. So if you think that what you're going to need is a helicopter, better pick the guy who's got one. Then on the mission, you're going to be able to switch between agents to get out of any sticky situation that confronts you.

The graphics look great. More of the same from the original MASK, and if the gameplay's up to standard, we should have a very tidy game in MASK II.

Streetdate: November.
Price: £7.99





JACKAL

Games with nice sandy sort of desert scenes and palm trees and big explosions and hairy muscle-bound men appeal to me. They remind me of the holiday I had in Torremolinos last year.

So I quite like the idea of Jackal, which contains all these elements, and more, in one neat, tidy, easy to carry package.

Yup, yet another rip-roaring, head-busting, gut-wrenching, jeep-drivin' coin-op conversion, and don't it feel good? (Where did all those clichés come from?) Konami is touting Jackal around to anyone who'll put up with them for half an hour. And with good reason. Jackal looks rather nice, very close to the original coin-op, and should prove immensely popular with those of you out there who just can't resist running over the little men who come running out from the barracks hoping to be saved.

Great fun, out soon, at a desert near you.

Street date: November.
Price: £7.99

JUDGE DEATH: 2000 AD PT 37

So many *2000AD* licences! Slaine reviewed in this SU and now Judge Death from Piranha.

There's never a dull moment in Megacity One. Either spaced-out groups of perps wander the streets in thoroughly absurd outfits, making a nuisance of themselves mugging, robbing and dropping litter (virtually a capital offence) or the big nuclear reactor that only appeared in last week's issue of *2000AD* has developed mysterious structural flaws and is about to spew trillions of gallons of equally mysterious, and undoubtedly lethal liquid on to the helpless masses.

This time though, it's a gang of highly unsavoury people who go by the name of The Dark Judges. Intent on really putting the mockers on any sort of peaceful existence the MC One populace may have, they are scurrying about the city, wasting people like it was going out of fashion. Each Judge has his own particular idiom. Judge Death puts his hand into his victim's chest and squeezes their heart 'til it explodes. Judge Fear simply opens his mask and lets the lucky soul catch a glimpse of his fizzog. Judge Fire burns the poor unfortunate, and Judge Mortis, well, he gets up to the *most* unpleasant things.

You, as Judge Anderson (her of the spray-on costume and anything-proof make-up) from Psi-Division must combat the four judges all on your lonesome.

I guess Dredd must be stuck at the lunderette or visiting Ried on Tilan (nyah nyah. We *do* read the strip) or something.

And how does Judge A. go about dispelling the dreadful forces of death and destruction? She shoots them, of course.

Yup. You guessed it. Judge Death is a game very much akin to duck-shoot. The screen shows a head-on view of Mega-City One with walkways, towers and lots of pedestrians trolling around. Using your special Spidey sense (or something) you can locate the evil judges and zoom in on them. Then it's just a question of resting your cross-hair sight over the most vulnerable part of the target's body and firing away.

Check out the shot and Judge for yourself. (If you use that pun one more time, you'll be next up for Deathworld, Punk! – Ed)

Streetdate: November.
Price: £9.95

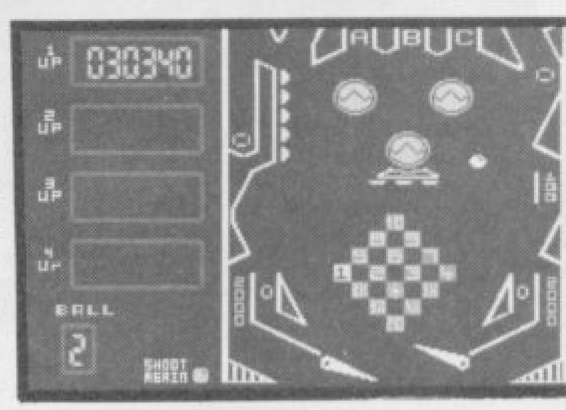


MICROBALL

Strange idea, putting a pinball machine on a computer. But it works. Alternative says so.

Anyway, for those of you who are die-hard pinnie fans, Microball gives you a very basic table, but it is quite good fun for those of use who like to poodle about a bit. Simple controls, nice pingy, shoom, bing noises and one or two flashing lights.

Streetdate: October.
Price: £1.99



GREMLIN GOES TIDDLY

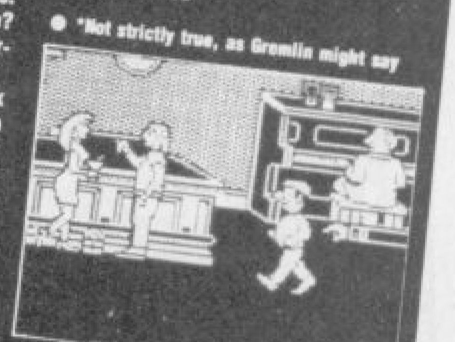
Gremlin has gone completely mad. Its latest whacky idea is to produce a game based around a board game compendium. Chief characters are the Wink family, father, Tiddly, and wife Mavis. (Mavis, why Mavis for heavens sake? Why not Edna, or Dorothy, or Bertram)?

Taking the role of any of the Wink family, including the dog, (why, do dogs play games?) up to four lucky people can play Snakes and Hazzards, Ludo and Bingo, and the pub game, involving flying pint glasses and a very drunk Father Wink.

It all sounds appalling if you ask me, I grew out of that sort of thing last month. Anyway, seeing is believing I suppose, and we'll see Compedium pretty soon apparently. I just can't wait.*

Streetdate: October.
Price: £7.99

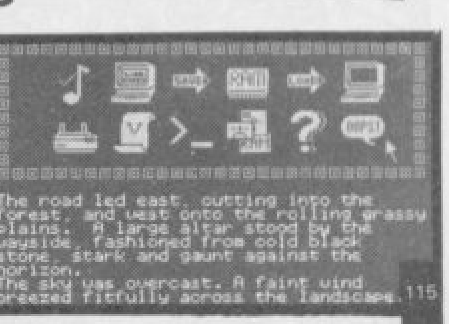
● *Not strictly true, as Gremlin might say



ENCHANTRESS

And another adventure. This tiem it's Enchantress by Fergus MacNeill's mob, being released this time by CRL. The point of the game is to kill the Enchantress. Not very friendly I'll admit, but necessary to the general well being of things. Screen shots show sort of rural pictures (fir trees and log cabins and the like) – as you see.

Streetdate: December.
Price: To be confirmed



GREMLIN'S ETHICAL GUIDE FOR THE BEWILDERED PR PERSON

Here is a handy tip in being kind to human beings:
Examine the picture below.
How many people are there in this picture?
Let's count them shall we,
One Two Three Four
Now let's pretend we are a well known PR company. How many people are in this picutre?
One Two.
What happened to the other two people?
It's easy, two of the people in this picture are blonde girls and two are dark men.
What does the caption to this picture say?
"From left to right
Ian Stewart, Gremlin Graphics
Wyn Holloway, Konix"
See, the blonde girls aren't really there at all.
Even though they are humans and obviously in the picture.
This (handy tip, time) is not kind to humans.



▲ Not there

Not there ▲

Possibly the most tragic sight at this years PCW show was Rambo. **Rambo was lolling around one of the stands looking forlorn. It wasn't really** Rambo **of course but merely a look alike actor pretending to be him. Actually he didn't look *very much* alike and spent much of the time looking doubtfully at a** hand grenade **which he held as though it was a stale** sandwich.

It was astonishing how many different ways software companies found of attracting the unwary to their stands. Rambo, Yogi Bear, Basil the Mouse Detective, **assorted videos of assorted films on assorted giant banks of telescreens. There was every kind of promotional device imaginable to get you to the stand – a few** naive **software houses even considered showing their latest computer games.**

This PCW **seemed to have a considerably reduced number of** WETSI's **(Women Employed to Smile Inanely). There was nothing like Mark Cale's legendary System 3** soft-porn **dance troop seen in a past** PCW, **and, generally, stupid metallic uniforms seem to be being worn longer this year.**

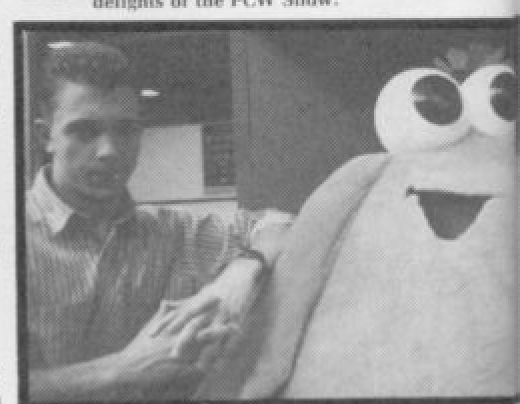
A quick mention here for Melanie who happened to be right next to the SU stand, she was in the finals of Miss Great Britain **or something and tried ever so hard to look cheerful promoting sticky computer labels. She, like the rest of the WETSIs on her stand, was wearing a white uniform which gave the illusion she was a member of the medical profession.**

Gremlin Graphics **deserves a special mention for its girls dressed in** bacofoil **with green trimmings (reminding *Gremlin* of the uniform once worn by the** Aquarius **computer girls of years gone by, one of whom once seriously explained to *Gremlin* that the** Aquarius **was a good computer because it had a proper keyboard).**

Far more disturbing on the Gremlin **stand was the** Gremlin **himself – a cartoon character on a TV screen who appeared to really talk. It moved its mouth approximately in time with a** sinister **disembodied voice which talked to, or rather at, people passing the stand. "You've got nice legs – I like nice legs" it said lewdly to two passing girls who looked horrified and sped off as fast as their nice legs would carry them.**

Microprose was promoting Gunship **and the program was probably on display somewhere but the central feature of its stand was a helicopter simulator, a gleaming white hydraulic thing you actually climbed into. The lucky person in the simulator then got to fly the thing around guided by an experienced pilot. At one point Microproses'** Wild Bill Stealy **did the honours on the radio mike. He was clearly in his element: "Nose down! You have a target! Launch flare! Hostiles behind you!" Stuff like that. He got so enthusiastic that after one trainee had successfully** obliterated **a hostile in a ball of flames *Gremlin* really thought he**

SU's own Jim Douglas (right) sampling the delights of the PCW Show.





Gremlin Top Ten most commonly used words and phrases used in Games Reviews

Word	Typical Usage
1) **Addictive:**	The only way to describe this is addictive
2) **Zap-em-up:**	This game is a real Zap-em-up
3) **Green Aliens:**	There are these green aliens you have to kill
4) **Hoards:**	Actually there are hoards of Green Aliens
5) **Left to right scrolling:**	The left to right scrolling of the hoards of green aliens
6) **Yugoslavian:**	Those Yugoslavians look pretty mean*
7) **A-ha!:**	This game is a right load of a-ha!*
8) **Logical Positivism:**	Wah! Logical Positivism! These guys are mean!*
9) **Halibut:**	Yet another kill-the-Halibut game*
10) **Nom de plume:**	Watch out for the hoards of screaming nom de plumes*

*Some of the words and phrases are not really commonly used

Gremlin

was going to say "I love the smell of napalm in the morning" and play Ride of the Valkyrie **over the PA.**

Stand design is definitely getting more bizarre. **The variety of shapes and sizes was impressive. One worrying trend however was the way a number of companies had built themselves little conference areas high up on the roof of the stand reached by entrances unavailable to ordinary** minions**. Rampant,** egomania **was also in evidence in the way the higher** echelons **of the computer companies have started to have elaborate appointment systems for those who wish to see them. "I'm afraid Mark is fully booked until 5.30 but he may be able to squeeze you in after that" said snotty receptionists. Just like going to the** hairdressers **really. The computer games industry is underappreciated in the media, certainly, but** God **knows what will happen to these people if the situation changes and they start to actually become** famous.

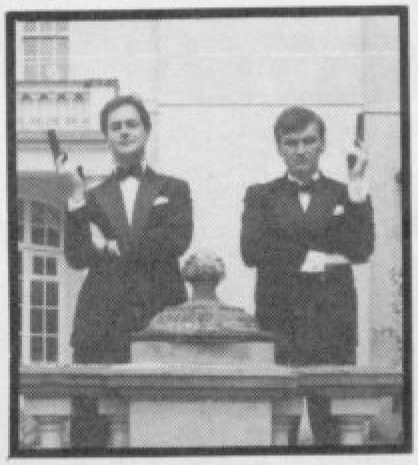
One final important point. Weren't those burgers **disgusting?■**

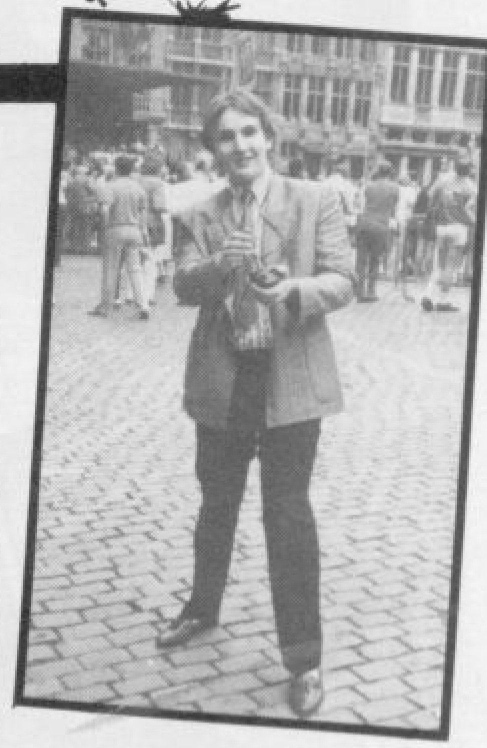
CAPTION COMPO No 12

Aload of old crud for last month's caption competition with, despite a largish number of entries, no really funny entries at all.

Quite a few people were enamoured of the idea that the Dom Doms were out to kill Sir Clive or Alan Sugar. Some were OKish but no more than that.

As ever it was usually the odd-ball efforts that worked best. *Gremlin* quite liked "And I thought playing the Living Daylights was bad!", was mystified by "Listen Ducky if you think I look weird standing like this you should look in a mirror." The eventual winner was from someone whose name and address were either lost or were never sent. Anyway that person sent in "Why did they have to put so much starch in these damn suits" which effectively captures the fixed unnatural expression in their faces. Would this mystery person please write in with their name and address and claim their mystery check. Thank you.





This month we have something different – a man standing in the middle of nowhere with a Konix joystick which is not connected to anything. What an earth is he thinking? Or what might people in the background be saying? It's up to you. The funniest one gets the payola and a one-way ticket to Penge*

Send your entries to Gremlin Caption Competition (Oh my God can it really be a whole year) No 12. Closing date for entries is November 3. Which is very near fireworks day.

Name ....

Address.......................................

....

....

Caption ....

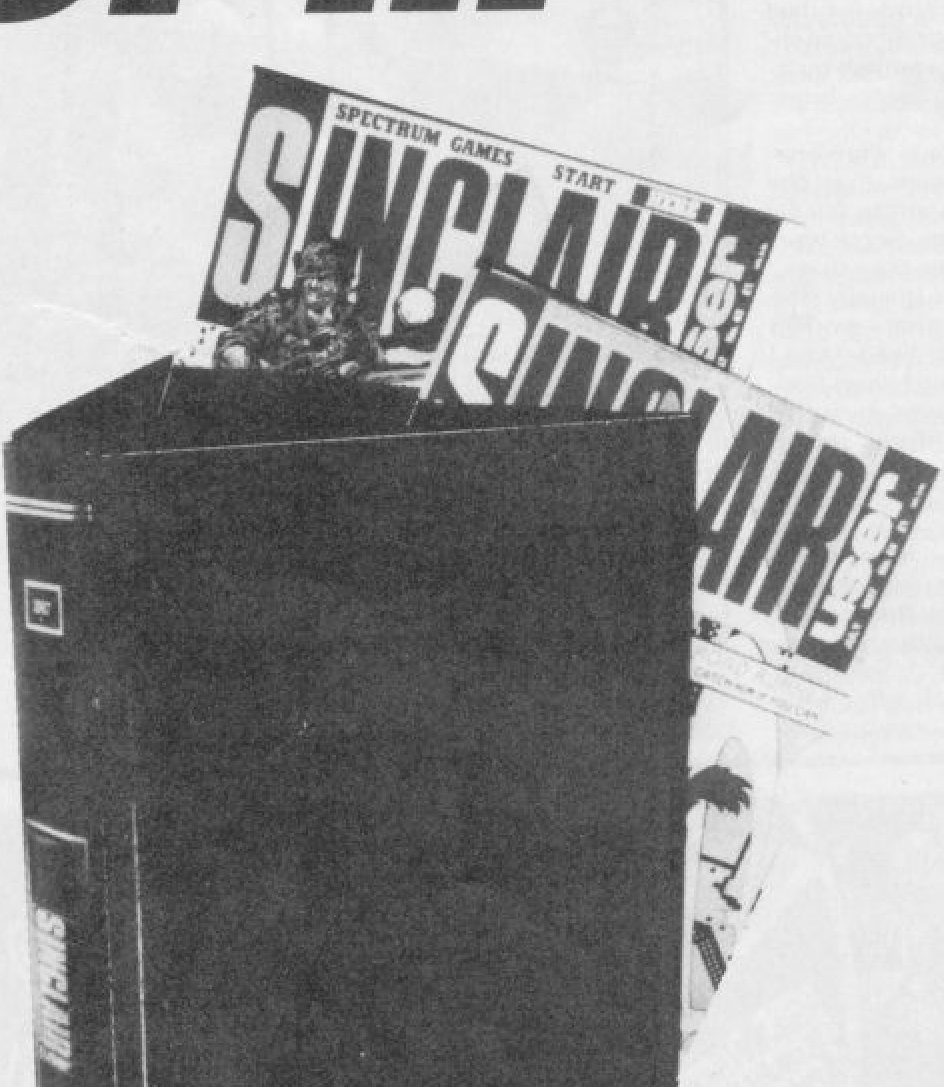
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*Not necessarily



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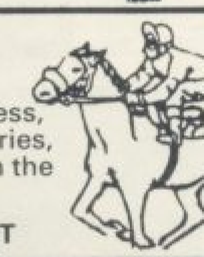
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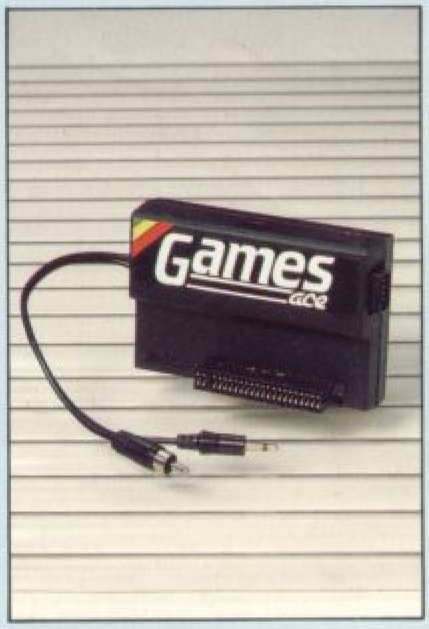
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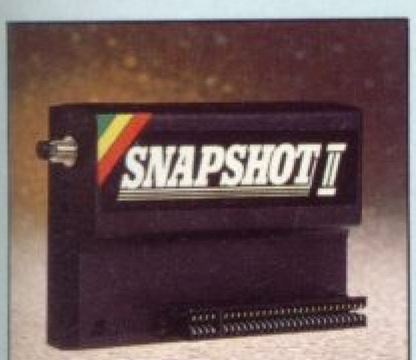
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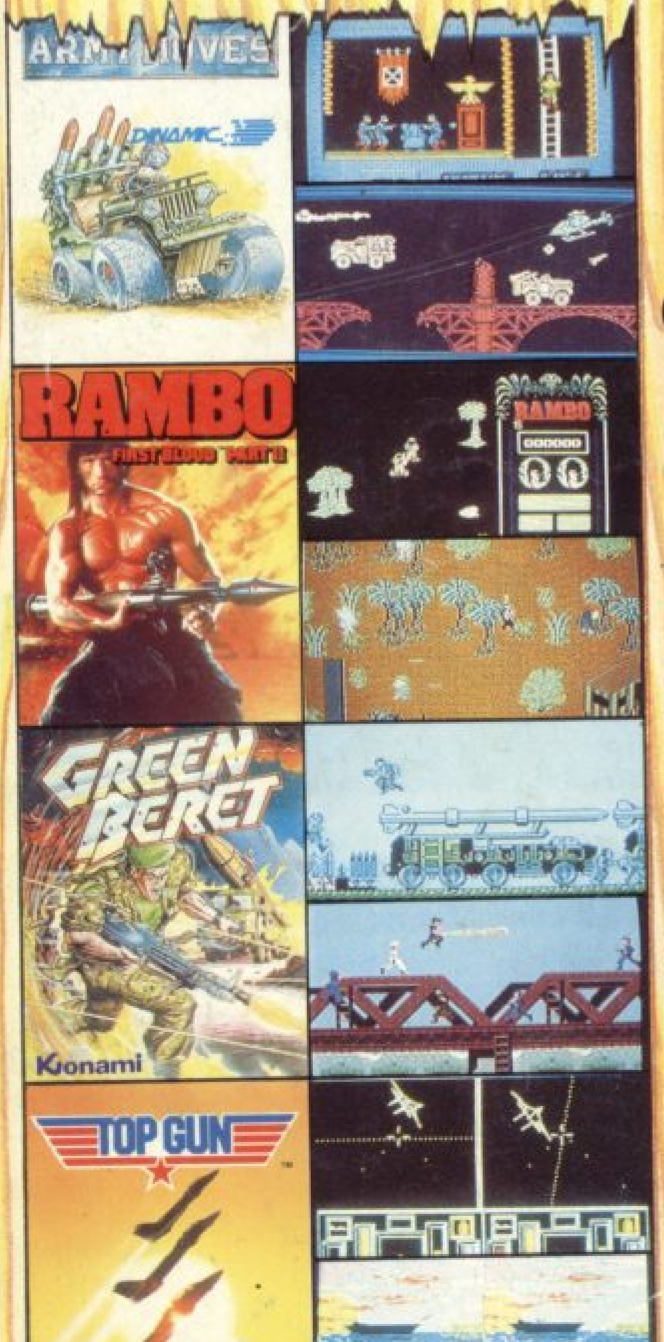


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